



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

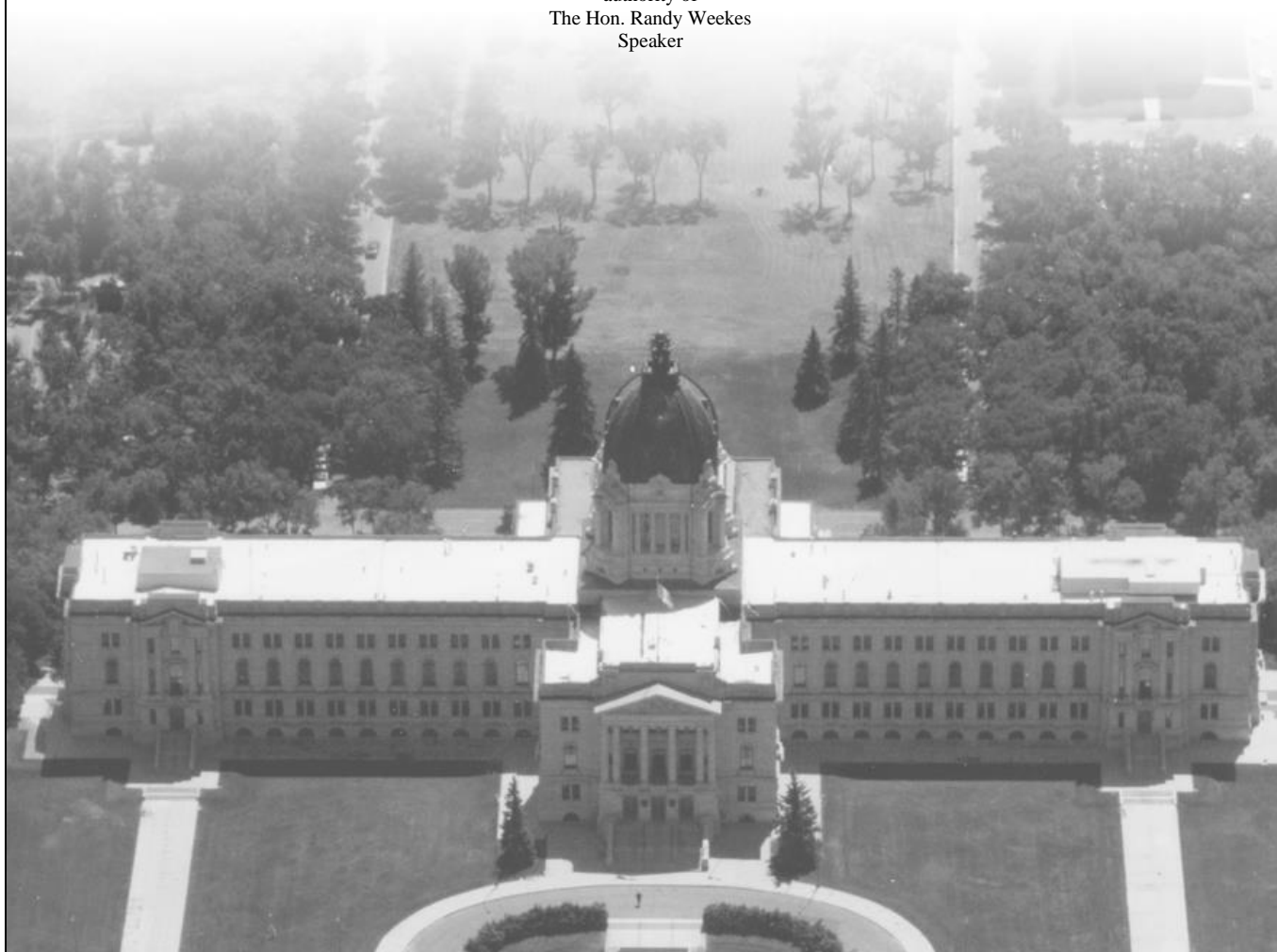
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

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authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

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Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
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Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
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Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm so pleased to be able to welcome Victoria Gagné, who is seated in your gallery today. Victoria graduated from McGill University in 2018 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree and a minor in Indigenous studies. After graduation, Victoria was hired as an accountant at KPMG. Following her time at KPMG, Victoria began working at the Clarence Campeau Development Fund where she serves as a business development and community relations specialist.

The Clarence Campeau Development Fund is Canada's leading Métis financial institution. It is supported through legislation by the Government of Saskatchewan. The Clarence Campeau Development Fund has worked to improve the economic circumstances of Saskatchewan Métis for the past 25 years. In that time they've created over 3,800 direct jobs and invested 89.6 million into the Saskatchewan economy. Last year the Clarence Campeau Development Fund had a record year, growing Saskatchewan's economy by investing 8.2 million into Métis businesses and creating over 261 direct jobs.

The Clarence Campeau Development Fund is a national leader in Indigenous women entrepreneurship. Last night I was pleased to attend the launch of their Indigenous women entrepreneurial program. Through this program, the Clarence Campeau Development Fund is aiming to increase the number of businesses they assist that are led by Métis women up to 50 per cent. I think that's a remarkable goal, and I want to congratulate Victoria and everyone at Clarence Campeau Development Fund for their hard work on this fantastic initiative. I hope all members of this Assembly will join me in congratulating and welcoming Victoria. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming a true shining star in this province and this country, Victoria Gagné, to her legislature. I haven't requested leave for extended introduction, but I will add on a few accolades here. I believe

Victoria was a Fulbright Canada scholar. She funded her education at McGill entirely through scholarships and bursaries, which her mom might knock me for not knowing the number, but I believe was over \$100,000.

She is a remarkably accomplished young woman, a graduate of Harvest City here in Regina. From what I recall, Victoria's been interested in entrepreneurship I think from an incredibly, incredibly young age, I believe, starting with your grandpa maybe, and your grandparents. And has just done a remarkable job as a young person in this province and outside of this province, pursuing her passions of entrepreneurship. And also as a proud Métis woman in Saskatchewan, bringing that commitment back home, right here in the province.

I am proud to have known her for quite some time and just absolutely thrilled that she is bringing her immense skills, ambition, and the deep passion that she shares for entrepreneurship and Indigenous governance and the province of Saskatchewan back home here. So to all members, please join me in welcoming Victoria, this leader in our province, to her legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce an individual seated in your gallery. A proud resident of Indian Head, Todd Rennebohm is here today. He is a strong advocate for mental health and addictions services in Saskatchewan.

On top of all of the work that he does, he is also an author, Mr. Speaker. He wrote the book called *Sometimes Daddy Cries*, a story about a child, a son witnessing his dad suffering from depression. And he was inspired to write that book based on witnessing his own children's struggle through his own mental health illness. A hugely important piece of work in ensuring that we look at all perspectives of all of those who are affected by mental health. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to have him here join with us today, and I'd ask all members join me in welcoming him to his legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome Todd to his Legislative Assembly. It's been a few years. It's been quite a few years actually since we've been in touch, but we did have a number of conversations probably five or six years ago, I guess. And glad to see you doing so well and looking so well. And just welcome to your . . . And the bow tie is class. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join the other members in welcoming Todd to his legislature. I had an opportunity just to meet briefly in the hallways earlier this afternoon. And Todd and I actually met virtually earlier this

winter. I had participated in a couple of podcasts on mental health and addictions. And Todd, as we've heard, very engaged in this area of mental health and addictions as an advocate, posed some questions on there as part of those podcasts, very well thought out. And again, I just want to join the other members in welcoming Todd to his legislature today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to again present a petition calling for changes to the broken SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program. We heard announcements in this budget of an extra dollar a day in basic benefits, Mr. Speaker, and the feedback that we're receiving from the community is that simply doesn't cut it. It doesn't even keep lockstep with inflation since this program was launched in 2019-2020. It's simply not good enough. It's a tweak and a grossly inadequate one at that.

So with that, I will read the petition:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to restore direct payment of rent and utilities for income support clients.

The signatories of this petition reside in Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be on my feet to again present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for home supports for older adults in Saskatchewan. The petitioners would like us to be aware that other jurisdictions around the world have envisioned a much different future for older adults in their communities than what we currently have here. And that coming out of the pandemic, I think it's upon us to look at all options and also to listen to what older adults are asking for. In particular, implementing a home supports program has been successful in other areas to reduce strain on long-term care, improve outcomes, and it comes at a much lower cost than institutionalized care.

I think it's particularly important to note that the petitioners are asking this government to work with older adults, not to impose policy or solutions on them, but to listen, to work with them in generating solutions that we want to see for positive aging and dignity at all ages here in Saskatchewan.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to work with older adults, stakeholders, and municipalities to design a home supports program that will allow seniors to age with dignity and autonomy in their homes and communities.

This petition is signed by residents of Regina. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on my feet today to present a petition calling for the government to reject the proposed Lambert Peat Moss development. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the proposed Lambert Peat Moss project has proposed the creation of a peat moss mine near La Ronge in northern Saskatchewan, and many local residents, hunters, trappers, and traditional land users are opposed to the mine, concerned about damage to habitats, including critical habitat for caribou; traplines; and drinking water sources. More than 20,000 people signed an online petition calling for the mine to be stopped.

I'll read the prayer:

The prayer that reads as follows respectfully requests that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the provincial government to protect the boreal forest and reject the proposed Lambert Peat Moss development.

It is signed by the residents of La Ronge and Air Ronge. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise once again today, one of numerous times in the last year or so that I've presented this petition calling for pay equity legislation in Saskatchewan.

Our petition today has the residents calling on the government to bring their attention to the following: Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation in Canada. We also have one of the highest gender wage gaps in Canada — nearly \$5 an hour — a difference between what women make in this province on average versus what men make on average.

And that's the result of systemic gender discrimination, which needs to be corrected. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation, which has not been pursued by the Government of Saskatchewan. And that we need to be mindful that while pay equity advocacy primarily seeks to address gender-based wage discrimination, we also must be conscious of ability-, age-, identity-, and race-based wage discrimination.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce pay equity legislation.

And the petition today has been signed by folks from Martensville and Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

**Employers and Staff to
Receive Education on Interpersonal Violence**

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Justice and Attorney General, along with the Status of Women office, have announced funding to develop a new online course. This will be a key step in educating employers and staff on the complexities of interpersonal violence and abuse outside of the workplace. With an investment of \$59,000, the development of this online module will be done in partnership with the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan.

The Effective Workplace Response to Interpersonal Violence training module will focus on how people experiencing interpersonal violence can be impacted and how employers and co-workers can offer support. The course outlines how to recognize the signs of abusive relationships, how to respond to colleagues experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse, and how to refer victims to community support networks. The workplace can be a place of safety and support for individuals experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse.

Interpersonal violence is a serious issue that we all share a responsibility to address. We need to make it our business. This course is an important step in standing together to support those at risk of or currently experiencing domestic violence in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Former Saskatchewan Senator Receives Order of Canada

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to celebrate one of my constituents, the incredibly accomplished Hon. Dr. Lillian Dyck. Dr. Lillian Dyck was born in North Battleford and is a member of Gordon First Nation as well as a first-generation Chinese Canadian. Her mother was a survivor of residential schools and her Chinese-born father overcame significant obstacles building a life in Canada.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Dyck is a woman of firsts. She is the first female First Nations senator and first Canadian-born senator of Chinese descent in Canada. Prior to being a senator, Dr. Dyck received her Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in Science from the University of Saskatchewan, the first year the university awarded this distinction. Recently Dr. Dyck was appointed to the Order of Canada for her tireless advocacy for First Nations and racial minorities and for contributing to human rights and social justice in Saskatchewan and Canada.

Her work includes, but is not limited to, missing and murdered Indigenous women, violence against Indigenous women, representation of Indigenous women in science and technology, Indigenous education, and employment and mental health. She was instrumental in successfully advocating for legislative

changes that required judges to consider stiffer penalties for violent crimes against Indigenous women.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Dr. Lillian Dyck for making Saskatchewan a more inclusive place, and congratulating her on her appointment to the Order of Canada.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Unity Successful at Rivers West Recreation Awards

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Rivers West Sport, Culture and Recreation recently named the winners of their annual awards, and Unity parks and recreation director Nicole Headrick was named Recreation Professional of the Year. Mr. Speaker, Nicole was nominated because she is a very hands-on rec director and can always be found sweeping up after a game, helping to clean bathrooms, or working with students during the summer. She's approachable, has a willingness to listen, and desires to see challenges and problem resolution through to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Speaker, Nicole also experienced numerous challenges with the Unity Community Centre upgrade and renovations, including spearheading the massive bat-colony-removal project, all while performing her regular duties during a pandemic.

The Unity Community Centre arena also won an award for Recreation Facility of the Year — Renovated or New Build. Town councillor Brent Weber says, "The rink is the heartbeat of the hub of town, and seeing the pride people have in the finished product is wonderful."

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating Nicole on her award and the town of Unity on their beautifully renovated facility that the community will continue to enjoy for years to come. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

The Broadway Theatre Wins Venue of the Year Award

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, The Broadway Theatre is the iconic movie theatre, music and event venue in my constituency, Saskatoon Nutana. The theatre opened its doors in 1946, screening popular movies of the time and hosting live musical performances. Since then it's evolved with the times to remain a viable community enterprise.

During the '70s when the area started to decline, it became an adult movie venue. In the '80s as the area enjoyed a revival, it was restored to a film, cinema, and live-performance venue. But in August of '93 the struggling, beloved theatre closed. The community rallied, and the Friends of The Broadway Theatre, a non-profit and charitable organization, was formed. They held a public fundraising drive to purchase the theatre to preserve and renovate it. Later that year the theatre reopened as Canada's only non-profit theatre. And in 1997 The Broadway Theatre was designated a municipal heritage property.

Despite the struggles faced during the pandemic, The Broadway

Theatre recently received the Saskatchewan Music Award, Venue of the Year for 2021. I ask all members to join me in congratulating The Broadway Theatre, the volunteer board, staff, and its many patrons who keep The Broadway Theatre a valued community arts and cultural hub.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Prognathodon Fossil Discovered at Grasslands National Park

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is well known for some of the world's most exciting fossil finds, and it is home of Scotty, the world's largest Tyrannosaurus rex. Now our province can add another major find to its fossil records with the discovery of a giant prognathodon in Grasslands National Park, sometimes known as the T. rex of the sea.

This massive marine reptile is an absolute beast, measuring in about 11 metres in length. This specimen was slightly smaller than Scotty and is a bit older, approximately 75 million years old. Like many fossils discovered, it will take time to uncover. It will be housed in the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

Mr. Speaker, this new find is going to add another incredible piece to the provincial collection and to our knowledge of the ancient sea life that once covered Saskatchewan. This is another example of the excellent work being done by the RSM [Royal Saskatchewan Museum] research staff and that they always have something new happening at the RSM. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville-Warman.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park Recognized with Global Vision Award

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's no secret to us in Saskatchewan that Saskatchewan is home to some of Canada's greatest travel experiences. Today I'm honoured to rise in the House and recognize Wanuskewin Heritage Park. Mr. Speaker, Wanuskewin has won a 2022 *Travel + Leisure* Global Vision Award. These awards honour the top 33 companies, individuals, and destinations from around the world with an emphasis on sustainable travel products, practices, and experiences.

For thousands of years the Indigenous peoples of the northern Great Plains followed bison all the way up the South Saskatchewan River. At Wanuskewin, which is Cree for "seeking spiritual peace," they hunted, trapped, camped, and feasted for generations.

An important step toward the restoration of this sacred place came in 2019 when bison were brought back to the plains of Wanuskewin for the first time since the mid-1800s. Six of these bison were transplanted from Saskatchewan's Grasslands National Park and five from the US [United States].

Mr. Speaker, today Wanuskewin is a 741-acre nature preserve and cultural complex that tells the story of the land and its inhabitants through the art and archaeological displays. The restaurant serves contemporary spins on Indigenous dishes, wild rice burgers, for example, or fritters made from the three sisters

— beans, corn, and squash.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, congratulations to Wanuskewin and their team on this well-deserved recognition. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Provision of Rural Health Care Services

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night in her budget reply, the member from Saskatoon University urged us to listen to the experts while referencing a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] article in which academic Steven Lewis described rural health care recruitment and retention as "too hard."

Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite left out was Mr. Lewis's proposed solution. In Lewis's opinion, "retention would improve . . . if the rural health-care system was redesigned to have care be consolidated to a few centres."

Mr. Speaker, this isn't the first time the NDP [New Democratic Party] has called for more rural hospital closures. When he was leader of the opposition, the member for Rosemont demanded that the government implement the expert recommendations of the Fyke report on health care. That report called on the government to close another 50 hospitals on top of the 52 the NDP already closed.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite can listen to the experts who want to remove health care services from rural Saskatchewan. On this side of the House, we'll listen to our constituents who want to keep these services. This government will do the hard work to get our rural health care services back on track. And we'll make sure the NDP never again get the chance to take those services away. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Support for Child and Youth Mental Health

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, when asked about the child and youth advocate's recommendations yesterday, the minister said he'd have to work with other ministries to determine how they'll be implemented. Well, Mr. Speaker, the frustrating thing about that answer is that we once had a Saskatchewan child and family agenda designed to coordinate ministry support for our kids. Despite years of work from the former children's advocate to create this wraparound strategy for children, this government quietly scrapped it in 2016. And in the advocate's words, "The prioritization of children's interest through this agenda and its various iterations have fallen by the wayside."

Mr. Speaker, why did the government scrap this very important work?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I said yesterday, we thank the Office of the Children's Advocate for their work on this very important matter, engaging with stakeholders and youth across this province. Mr. Speaker, we take this issue very seriously on this side of the House and know that, you know, there are steps to be taken here. There have been a number of significant investments into mental health and addictions across this province over the past number of years, Mr. Speaker.

In this year's budget we are investing over \$92 million in targeted mental health and addictions initiatives that have been invested — \$92 million more since 2018, Mr. Speaker. And we continue to make record investments into this area. There's been significant investments into a number of initiatives in the past, Mr. Speaker. But we know that the situation is always evolving, and we want to make sure that the decisions that we make and the initiatives that we fund are addressing some of those very concerns. And we're committed to doing that important work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, that minister and this government takes this issue so seriously they scrapped the agenda that would have solved a lot of these problems back in 2016. According to the advocate, this strategy "died a slow death."

Mr. Speaker, in her report she recommends this government develop a children's strategy which, like the pre-existing agenda this government scrapped in 2016, would bring child-serving ministries together to improve outcomes for children and youth. In the advocate's words, "This investment will be one ministry solely responsible to deal with the fallout of a broken system that continues to perpetuate decades of gaps and barriers in service."

Mr. Speaker, when kids are bounced from ministry to ministry, they fall through the cracks. Will the minister commit to implementing all of the advocate's recommendations with an actionable timeline and develop a children's strategy today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are appreciative of the work done by the Children's Advocate office and their report that was tabled yesterday.

There are a number of recommendations there, 14 in total, Mr. Speaker. That's going to require some further discussions amongst our various ministries and, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do that as quickly as possible. I can report that I've been having those discussions with ministers today as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, in terms of next steps going forward. And I know that officials within the various ministries are also doing that work to ensure that we address some of the gaps that have been identified when it comes to some of the challenges that we face in the system.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we are making this as seamless as possible and making sure that when people reach out for help when it comes to mental health and addictions —

and particularly our youth and our children — that they're able to do so in an effective manner and in a timely manner. And we're committed to making sure that we do as soon as we can, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, no matter which question I ask, we get the same lines. And this government appreciates the Children's Advocate's work so much they've scrapped previous advocates' important work.

Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that the system is broken. The advocate said as much. "Either the system needs redesigning or more resources are required."

Mr. Speaker, we are joined today by another voice for mental health, Todd Rennebohm, sitting in your gallery. Todd is a suicide-attempt survivor that has dedicated his life to mental health awareness and advocacy. He is appalled by the advocate's findings but, like Chris and Wanda Ball who were here with us yesterday, he knows that these issues have persisted for decades without any real action from this government.

We know the cost of maintaining the status quo is far too great. What is the minister's plan to streamline these recommendations and provide the life-saving services our children need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank Todd for being in the Assembly today to raise these issues. And I would be willing to meet with Todd later this afternoon if he so chooses or at a time of his convenience. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I had a chance to just chat briefly, very briefly, earlier today with Todd in the hallways but have also engaged with him on social media through a couple of addictions and mental health podcasts earlier this year where he has raised some of his concerns and ideas around mental health and addictions.

[14:00]

And that is what is also very important to the decisions that we are making going forward, making sure that we're listening to the, as we heard yesterday, representatives of the youth advisory council who are participating in the Children's Advocate's report, but also individuals with learned experience such as Todd who also advocate today to make improvements to the system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, in Todd's words the government:

... keeps insisting they are spending more and more on mental health and investing in crucial programming. If that is true, then why are wait times getting longer? Why do 30 per cent of our youth suffer from depression? Why do we keep breaking overdose records? And why do we have some of the highest rates of suicide?

Mr. Speaker, what is the minister's plan to bring support and help to kids when they need it before they end up in our emergency rooms or much worse?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In previous budget years, we invested into projects such as the \$1.3 million into community recovery teams which are located in a number of cities around the province, Mr. Speaker. We have invested more money for mental health workers in children for youth, \$4.1 million in previous budget, Mr. Speaker, that provide for over 35 more FTEs [full-time equivalent] serving children and youth, Mr. Speaker. In the next year's budget, 2022-23, we have \$3.4 million dedicated toward the integrated youth services which will speak to and address some of these issues with regards to better coordinating services and providing a one-stop shop for youth and children when it comes to accessing the services they need.

There's an additional amount of funding of \$800,000 to expand the mental health capacity-building program in schools, Mr. Speaker, which is one of the recommendations in the Children's Advocate report. That is a program that has worked exceptionally well, and that is why we're committing more funding into that very important program in schools. And there are additional initiatives that are also funded, Mr. Speaker, that are helping. But we know that we have to continue to do additional work in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Surgical Backlog

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, there are 36,000 Saskatchewan people waiting for surgery, 10,000 more than when the Sask Party formed government. And the minister admitted this week that there are untold amounts that haven't even been able to get on the wait-list yet because they haven't seen their doctor for a referral. It's no wonder. We know that family practices have been closing and that we have the lowest proportion of doctors in the entire country. We know the wait-list for surgery is getting longer. But this government hasn't updated their surgical wait-list since last year. Exactly how many people are waiting for surgeries in Saskatchewan today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that we have a backlog of surgeries to address, and we've had that in previous years. And we have committed funds to do that, to address that backlog, and that will happen once again, Mr. Speaker. In this budget, Mr. Speaker, there's \$21.6 million being dedicated towards addressing the surgical backlog, an additional \$12.5 million being committed to add 11 additional ICU [intensive care unit] beds — the first part of a three-year strategy to add 31 ICU beds across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we know this is important for people across Saskatchewan. We know there were people waiting for surgery

prior to the pandemic, and the last two years of the pandemic and the slowdowns that that has had on our overall health care system has not helped. And that is why the backlog has grown, Mr. Speaker. But we are going to look to do whatever we can, and that is why we're committing additional funds to address the surgical backlog and have as many of these completed as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — It's *Groundhog Day* again, Mr. Speaker. Last year, last year we heard the Minister of Health say, don't worry; we've committed \$20 million to address the surgical backlog. The year before, we heard the Minister of Health say, don't worry; we've committed \$20 million to the surgical backlog. Mr. Speaker, what has changed this year?

The Minister of Health also said this week that the \$20 million for the surgical initiative would add 7,000 surgeries to our typical capacity of 90,000. Now I know not all surgeries cost the same, but I'm not sure how this math works out. Committing to increase surgical capacity by nearly 8 per cent with only 3 per cent more money starts to make you wonder if the surgical plan holds any water. How is the government going to do more surgeries with less money?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've announced several aggressive targets when it comes to surgical backlogs. To achieve these targets, we'll be increasing surgical volumes by 38,000 surgeries, compared to pre-pandemic levels, by 2025. It's a total of 38,000 surgeries, about 110,000 annually, which is an additional 500 surgeries a month this year, Mr. Speaker; 1,000 a month in 2023; and 1,500 a month in 2024. The SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] will expand and optimize their operating room capacity across this province to address that.

Something else that we'll be utilizing, Mr. Speaker, are something called private surgical centres, Mr. Speaker, which, you know, if we're going to be serious about addressing the backlog of surgeries, I'd hope that the members opposite would support those types of initiatives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this week the minister said he was hoping the federal dollars for surgeries could be used for other projects. Clearing the surgical backlog is either a priority or it isn't. Will the government commit that the \$60 million being provided for surgeries by the federal government will be fully utilized to get Saskatchewan's surgery backlog under control, and not to backfill other shortcomings of this government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course this is a priority for the government. This is what people are expecting of the government — that they address the backlog — and that is

why we're committing extra dollars in this budget, Mr. Speaker. Something that we don't know whether or not the members opposite would do that, Mr. Speaker, given their previous record.

Mr. Speaker, the amount of funding that we're receiving from the federal government amounts to \$62 million for the province of Saskatchewan. There's some detailed planning that has to take place for these funds once they become available, as we are waiting for more information from the federal government in terms of the timing of the allocation and whether or not it's allotted for specific programs, various program areas or services, Mr. Speaker, but we are committed to making sure that we address this backlog as per the timeline we've outlined in the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Government's Fiscal Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Later this week we'll be rolling into a new fiscal year where Saskatchewan families will be subjected to this government's latest round of PST [provincial sales tax] additions piled onto the single biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, that Sask Party government's hike and expansion of the PST just a few years ago. How on earth, how on earth does it make any sense to slap a new slew of PST hikes on Saskatchewan families that are already being crushed by the cost of living and that desperately need some relief?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, since we had the privilege of forming government, as the member opposite knows, we significantly decreased the property tax burden on property owners in the province. We have the second-lowest utility bundle. We have among the lowest of income tax within the country.

We have reduced child care fees. We'll reduce it further in this budget. We have the active families benefit to help families within the province. We have the children's drug plan, which we didn't have under the NDP. We have enhanced the seniors' drug plan in this budget, and for seven other times in the past, we have increased the seniors' income plan, which ups the low-income seniors. We have tax credits for disabilities. We have tax credits for caregivers. We have tax credits for home renovations. We have tax credits for first-time homeowners. There's a number of medical equipment situations that is subsidized. We subsidize ambulance fees for seniors, Mr. Speaker. If you add that all up in forgone revenue or direct payments to our citizens, it's over \$2 billion of affordability measures.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, more tired spin from a very tired government, Mr. Speaker. Nearly \$1.2 billion will be coming this year out of Saskatchewan people's pockets that weren't just five years ago in the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan people's history. And now with this piling on of more PST hikes, how offside with Saskatchewan people's reality. No idea over there about what families are going to.

To the minister, who exactly voted for harmonization of our sales tax with the federal government's?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, to save repeating an answer yet again to that particular member opposite, that he's heard that answer although he doesn't want to hear it, let's go back to other things that he said where he said that we need to do more than what we're doing and we need to do what other provinces are doing.

So let's just say in Saskatchewan, he should know that an individual doesn't start paying taxes until their income is over \$16,615, Mr. Speaker, and the PST in our province is 6 per cent, and we're having a \$100 rebate through auto-insured customers.

Mr. Speaker, in PEI [Prince Edward Island] — and I know there was a member opposite that loves PEI — they start paying taxes at \$11,250. Mr. Speaker, their PST is 10 per cent. And do you know what their affordability help was, Mr. Speaker? If you earn less than 35,000 you'll get \$150; between 35,000 and 50,000 it's \$100.

What about British Columbia? NDP British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, you start paying taxes at 11,300. I'm looking forward to the next question so I can finish this.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The question was on why she thinks Saskatchewan people want harmonization with our federal taxes, Mr. Speaker. No answer. That government claims that they're not harmonizing but that minister told the media, I quote, "If I did create that list, I probably wouldn't put taxing gym fees on the list of federal government guidelines." So the minister pretends they didn't want it, knew it wasn't in the interests of Saskatchewan people, but is slapping this tax on our health and fitness industry anyway, just because the federal government does as well.

Why would this minister tax our health and fitness industry when she knew it was a bad idea and while this industry was just getting back on its feet?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just need to finish my former answer on affordability. So in NDP British Columbia, you start paying tax at \$11,300, Mr. Speaker. Their PST is 7 per cent. And what kind of rebate did they give to their citizens to address affordability? \$110, Mr. Speaker. So quite frankly, we are matching other provinces other than Alberta.

And when it comes to . . . I still stand behind we don't want to raise taxes, Mr. Speaker, but we significantly increased health care funding, funding that they have asked us to do. We are going to aggressively recruit, retain, and train health care professionals. We're going to address the surgical wait-list that they just asked questions on. We are coming with ways that we're going to pay for it. And that is something that members opposite never account for — how they're going to pay it. Time and time again

they have a list of what they want to spend money on, with no idea where the money's going to come from.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — No answer. The question was on harmonization and the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history. And such hypocrisy from that government, screaming from the rafters about federal taxes but it's happy to slap a whole grab bag of provincial taxes on top of those federal taxes on Saskatchewan families when they're already hurting and desperately need some relief.

To the minister: will she scrap the harmonization to federal tax . . . Will she scrap the harmonization to federal sales taxes and scrap this piling on to the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — You know, I have to simply repeat what my colleague said. The only harmonization that's happening federally is between the Liberals and the NDP. And that is the most detrimental harmonization ever.

You know, it is the member opposite that's screaming from the rafters time and time again, with no solution, no answers yet again. You know, and it's why, quite frankly, the results of the last election were what they were. There was a platform put forward by the NDP and yet again no idea . . . Many promises but no costing, no transparency to the citizens, to the voters, of how they were going to pay for it. Four billion dollars of unexplained expenses with no idea how they're going to pay for it, and that's why they're down to 12 members over there.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Housing Supports

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Houses in Regina are literally burning down because people without options are breaking into abandoned buildings just to stay warm at night, Mr. Speaker. In our capital city, in a province as prosperous as ours, these fires are dangerous. They're hollowing out our community core.

But more important than that, Mr. Speaker, is these fires are shameful and they are unnecessary. They are a direct result in the spike in homelessness caused by the failed SIS program. Buildings are burning down because people can't get a roof over their head. Does the minister recognize that homelessness is up and that our housing crisis is putting people and our communities at risk?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, homelessness is a complex issue. The root causes are often intertwined with individuals who may be experiencing

challenges that could include disabilities, mental health, addictions, and interpersonal and intergenerational trauma, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, anyone that presents themselves to Social Services and needs a safe place to sleep does not go without a bed in our province. Mr. Speaker, we work very closely with emergency shelters across this province, and we make sure that people who need a safe place have one. If an emergency shelter happens to be full or doesn't meet the needs of that individual, Mr. Speaker, then we have the opportunity to put them up in a hotel for the evening. And then the next day we try to meet with that individual and work on a plan with them on how to get them some stable housing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've repeated this answer in the House more than once, and I will again if I have to.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, more talking points. No solutions. No clue from that minister what is actually happening in her ministry, what is actually happening on the ground. This government was warned that their failed SIS program would lead to more homelessness. Everyone — community-based organizations, stakeholders, landlords — begged them to course-correct. Instead of overhauling that broken program, that minister tinkered around the edges, found an extra buck a day, Mr. Speaker, and called it a fix. But it is anything but.

How much more loss and devastation do we need to see in our communities before this government creates an actual plan to address the housing crisis in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent upon all levels of government and community leaders and partners to play a role in helping with homelessness. Mr. Speaker, I think you'll see through the actions that we took this winter, partnering with some of our community-based organizations, whether that be RT/SIS [Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services Inc.] here in the city of Regina and the city of Regina or whether that be in the city of Saskatoon with that city, as well as Saskatoon Tribal Council. We worked very closely with those organizations to put up some temporary shelters for the winter and, Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to work with them to try to find long-term solutions for those people that may not have a place to live.

Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous question, there are several reasons that someone may be homeless, Mr. Speaker, whether that be mental health, addictions, trauma — several different reasons, Mr. Speaker. But if we get them to a community-based organization or they present at the Social Services office or even we have outreach teams, Mr. Speaker, we will work with that individual.

Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this is the second day I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan families who have lost a loved one to suicide. When will we see a real plan to save Saskatchewan lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In May of 2020, the provincial government released the Pillars for Life plan to address and prevent suicide. This year we're continuing to provide funding of \$1 million for the suicide prevention plan. This brings our total investment to \$3.24 million in the first three years of the budget cycle, Mr. Speaker.

Ongoing actions include approved psychiatric access for patients accessing emergency rooms in the Northwest, further expanding the mental health first aid training across the province to make sure we get that very needed training in as many communities as we possibly can, Mr. Speaker, as well as enhancing research to support local suicide prevention with a specific focus on our northern youth as well.

We have signed a letter of commitment with the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] and the federal government, Mr. Speaker. We fund annually the Roots of Hope suicide prevention projects in a number of communities — three communities in northern Saskatchewan actually, Mr. Speaker — and we're going to continue to make those important investments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 47, *The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2021* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill now be read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 47 and the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

**Bill No. 47 — *The Highways and Transportation
Amendment Act, 2021***

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill 47 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 45, *The Health Shared Services Saskatchewan (3sHealth) Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 45 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

**Bill No. 45 — *The Health Shared Services
Saskatchewan (3sHealth) Act***

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 45 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the

Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 62, *The Dental Disciplines Amendment Act, 2021* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill now be read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bills on Bill No. 62 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 62 — *The Dental Disciplines Amendment Act, 2021*

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill now be read the third time and be passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 62 be now read the third time, passed under its title. Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wotherspoon.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to conclude today by recognizing some very positive investments that are coming to my constituency in Northcote in this budget.

We've had record capital projects announced in this year's budget and that includes the twinning of Highway 3, which is just outside Prince Albert. It will go to nearly 8 kilometres. It's out to — anybody who knows that area — out to the Shell River area. This is the completion of the project. We saw the passing lanes go on that highway out to Shellbrook last year, and that made a huge difference.

And it is really safety. I travelled that highway lots. My mom and dad live out there in Shellbrook too, and I worked out there for a number of years. And it was a really scary highway to drive on. So these are great initiatives that are really going to impact the people of Prince Albert and surrounding area.

One really positive announcement that we have is the over \$13 million allocated for the ongoing planning and procurement for the Victoria Hospital. Huge announcement for our area. You know it's interesting. I wasn't living in Saskatchewan when the Victoria Hospital was closed. That's when I had to move away because of the conditions in our province at that time. But that's been the biggest complaint I've heard since coming back, is how our services were impacted by the closing of the Holy Family Hospital. So this is huge for our city and also for the surrounding communities and surrounding areas.

And I would also like to acknowledge, although it's not in Northcote, but the announcement for the planning for the La Ronge long-term care site. That is a very important project for the people in that area. And it impacts the whole area because people were having to leave their communities to come down to our area for long-term care. So this is also a very important announcement in this budget.

Our plan to double the growth of the forestry sector is huge news in Prince Albert and our surrounding communities. It's the biggest sector we have in the North and it supports thousands of jobs and it relies on our Indigenous businesses and workers up in that area.

Also the announcement to create the Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation is very good news up in our area and including the loan guarantee programs for private sectors lending to Indigenous communities and organizations. That is very, very major up in our area.

So Saskatchewan is back on track, Mr. Speaker, supporting people, investing in a strong and growing economy, and building a strong Saskatchewan. My students were right, Mr. Speaker. This is the land of hope and promise. I will be supporting the motion put forward by the Hon. Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance and seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's going to be hard to follow that member from Prince Albert Northcote. She did such a fantastic job. Anybody that listened to her speech last night, it was absolutely amazing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is called *Back on Track*, and a very deserving title. But I'm going to talk about my constituency a little bit to begin with, Mr. Speaker. Everybody talks about their CAs [constituency assistant], and they all think they have the best. But they're all wrong because I have the best ones. Shelley and Cindy are the best CAs you could possibly have. They look after me. They look after that constituency office when I'm down here in Regina, and they do an absolutely fantastic job. I think Shelley's been 20 . . . I think it's around 20 years now of being a CA. She knows the stuff inside out.

[14:30]

And, Mr. Speaker, also I want to give a shout-out to my office. You know, I'm just a little over my first year as being a minister. And the people in my office are absolutely great. We have Angela and Candace, Linda and Ryan, and they do a great job of preparing me for all of the things that are coming up and going on in my role as minister.

Mr. Speaker, I also was informed this morning that I have to give a shout-out to Karalee in the caucus office. Karalee, boy, now there's a person who believes in work. Honestly I've gone down there at 20 after 7, and Karalee'll be in there. And she still makes me make my own hot chocolate in the morning. She won't do that for me. But she is a very good person and a very dedicated person. She's been here for, well I guess ever since we formed government.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to thank my wife, Terry. You know, in this business we're away from home a lot. And of course this year, unlike southwestern Saskatchewan, northeastern Saskatchewan had a lot of snow. And so she's had a very busy winter not only working at her job but shovelling off our driveway and whatnot. She's a little lax on shovelling my walk out to the back. I park in the back garage, so sometimes when I get home she pre-warns me to wear my winter boots, you know, because the snow might be a little bit deep. And you know, I think she could get back there and do a little bit better job than that. But she's a great person for . . . A lot of people say she's a great

person for putting up with me.

Mr. Speaker, there's other thank yous to go out there too. And I would like to thank all the health care workers that have seen us through this situation. You know, two years has been a long time in the making, and the health care workers have done a fantastic job of what they do.

I also want to thank our Premier and the Health ministers we have, Dr. Shahab. These people worked tirelessly, absolutely tirelessly going through that. I know the NDP doesn't think that there was a good job done, but you know, it's very easy to complain but it's very difficult, very difficult to do.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to proudly say, proudly say my children are both working in Saskatchewan. I think most people here know that my son Morgan is working as chief of staff in the Ministry of Health, and that has been a big job. He's a bit of a workaholic, Mr. Speaker, but he enjoys his job and he's done a good job.

The other news, Mr. Speaker, is that our daughter Gina just finished off her master's in education this spring, and she is now a vice-principal out in Milestone, right close here to Regina. So you know this was great news. And her and her husband-to-be just bought a new house here in Regina, well new to them. And you know what? I wish them all the best. And it, you know, makes you pretty proud when you have your kids going like that.

Mr. Speaker, there's one other thing. And I know the people around here haven't heard this very often, but I would like to mention, you know, the Carrot River Wildcats. Now nobody's ever heard me talk about the Carrot River Wildcats in this constituency.

An Hon. Member: — Who beat them this year?

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Just you stay out of this. Mr. Speaker, they had a good football season, and they came up just one notch short of winning the provincials. But you know, it's great to see these kids, it's great to see these kids back out there, playing football, playing their sports and whatnot. What a difference it would have been if we would have had the NDP in power. They would still be sitting at home looking at their laptops, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few other things I'd like to say about Carrot River Valley. It's a great constituency. And like I said, I really thank the people who have put me in here for, you know, the amount of years I've been here. And apparently they don't know me that well.

But anyway, Mr. Speaker, you know, we've had great investments in our forest industry up there. Dunkley Lumber. Dunkley Lumber's investing \$100 million. We've got Weyerhaeuser going full bore over in their area.

Mr. Speaker, Dunkley Lumber . . . We are building a new school. Oh by the way, that's another thing. We're going to build a new school in Carrot River, you know, not closing it. I just thought I'd mention that for the other side. And this is the second new school that's being built in our constituency. The first one was at Hudson Bay, having one here now in Carrot River. And Dunkley

Lumber donated a million dollars towards that school. And the donations will come in from all sorts of people around the constituency and around Carrot River to help enhance some of the other schools.

We've also got Premier Peat who's done an expansion up there. They're doing a great job in the peat moss work. You know, we've just got all sorts of things going on in our constituency. Because you know what? This is a government where people like to look and they like to see a government that's friendly to work with. Dunkley Lumber, I talked to the owners of Dunkley Lumber, and they actually are from British Columbia. And they said it is . . . which, by the way, is NDP if anybody didn't know. Now they said it is just a world of difference dealing with the provincial government in Saskatchewan than dealing with the government out in NDP British Columbia.

I guess I better get on to my highway bit here. My time is kind of running along. And what I'd like to talk about on the highways, Mr. Speaker, is we continue to build on our 2030 growth plan. You know, this is a growth plan where we pledged to improve 10 000 kilometres in 10 years, Mr. Speaker. We're improving 1100 kilometres in this budget. With this budget we will have completed 3500 kilometres of highways since we started our growth plan. That's ahead of the pace we need.

Mr. Speaker, this government will invest \$453 million in capital projects in this budget. We'll twin Highway 3 to roughly 8 kilometres west of Prince Albert. We'll build 14 sets of passing lanes on Highways 5, 7, 12, and 16. We'll be completing pre-construction work on the Garson Lake road. And we will plan for short twinning projects between Regina and Weyburn on Highway 6 and 39 corridor that connects to the major Canada-US border crossing. These investments support our economy and our communities. They create jobs and prosperity. They make a great place to live even better.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also demonstrates our commitment to northern Saskatchewan. This budget invests 62.7 million to build, operate, and maintain the transportation system in northern Saskatchewan. We will continue making improvements to Highway 155. The Wollaston Lake winter road is nearing completion. And we will continue to operate 16 airports that serve our northern communities.

The Premier recently promised to build the Saskatchewan portion of the Garson Lake road. When that road is finished on both sides of the provincial boundary, it will provide direct access to Fort McMurray and good-paying jobs in the oil sands. We have written letters to the Alberta government to see if they will continue on on their end of it, and hopefully that they will.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this budget shows that this government will be there to support the people of northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP is chirping across from his seat. Take a look at what they ever did with highways, Mr. Speaker, when they told people to fill their own potholes.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to emphasize safety improvements to ensure we're protecting our most precious asset, our people. We said we'd spend 100 million over the five years to improve safety on our highways with the particular focus on intersections, and we're keeping that promise. This year we'll invest

19.2 million on things like turning lanes, lighting, and clearing sightlines.

Last year we added nearly half a million dollars to our mowing program, and we're maintaining that increase this year. This improves safety by ensuring clear sightlines on secondary roads and helps control weeds.

This budget invests more than 55 million this year to rebuild 15 bridges, and we'll replace more than 100 culverts.

Mr. Speaker, more than half a million dollars will be invested in improvements on shortline railways. The program will provide grants for up to 50 per cent of the eligible track material and construction costs. With matching dollars, the program leverages more than a million dollars of shortline improvements each year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue on, on some of the other things. One of the things I'd like to talk about, Mr. Speaker, is what's happening over in Europe. Now, Mr. Speaker, the invasion of Ukraine is terrible, to put it very bluntly. Mr. Speaker, there's some things . . . We support the Ukraine, and we will be taking as many Ukrainian people back into the province to help our workforce that we possibly can, Mr. Speaker. They're great people; they're putting up a heck of a resistance to the Russians.

You know, this is a disaster. But what we're seeing, what we're seeing going on over in the Ukraine, here's a way that Canada could have helped. Now we're a little bit behind times but unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, what we should be doing is . . . Of course the oil and the gas that Europe is getting is mainly coming from Russia. Now the NDP with their new leader, Justin Trudeau, has always been against putting pipelines out east. And they've been against oil.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time, this is a time when Europe desperately needs that, and we need that support from the NDP to be able to move that out across there. But now they've joined up with the Liberals. We always thought they were pretty well the same, but now they've joined up with the Liberals, and so consequently we're having a hard time having this . . . to try and do it quickly.

We should also be looking at the port of Churchill so we can move grain over to Europe also. Mr. Speaker, and speaking of that, speaking of that, while we have been doing all this work on the highways that the NDP left in just absolutely a disastrous state to be able to move everything, we need, we need to have the railways working.

Now just a matter of a couple of weeks ago, you know, we were talking . . . or the member from Regina University was complaining about the people up at Meadow Lake not being able to move their paper projects, because why? Because the CN was only supplying about 50 per cent capacity. And she was complaining about that.

So what'd we do? CP [Canadian Pacific Railway] was going to go on strike. We brought in an emergency motion, an emergency motion, Mr. Speaker, to be able to make the railways, since they have a duopoly, to make the railways as an essential service in this province. Well not just this province; in Canada, because we're having a heck of a hard time getting our shipping going.

So that was all fine. While the member from Regina University sat there and complained about what was going on in Meadow Lake, we brought in that emergency motion. What did they do? They voted against it. Which side are they on, Mr. Speaker? Which side are they actually on? Well we are trying to get this province moving. We have a growth plan. We have a plan to move this province forward, and we have other people who like to throw sticks into the spokes of the wheels to try and keep this province impoverished, like they were under the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, you know, when you take a look, when you take a look at all the things that have been going on in this province, like it's all doom and gloom over there. We've got \$13.6 billion worth of investments coming into this province and, Mr. Speaker, what do they do? They sit there and they complain. You know, it's honestly, Mr. Speaker, it's literally hard to believe. Hard to believe.

You know, they say, well put more money in the schools. Well I just told them I got two new schools in my constituency and while they were out there, what was it? You know, a school a month, I believe it was. That's what it was. They were closing a school a month. You know, they sit there and they complain about hospitals. And how many hospitals have we built, you know, since we've been in, since we've had the privilege to form government? Lots. Lots. Come on.

[14:45]

So while they closed 52 hospitals, and was brought up by the member from Prince Albert Northcote today, how many more they would just love to close in rural Saskatchewan? Mr. Speaker, you have to sit there and wonder.

They sit there and they talk about long-term care, Mr. Speaker. They closed 1,200 beds. We built 15 long-term care facilities. Actually there was a long-term facility built in Tisdale, and you know something? That is the first long-term facility that was built since Grant Devine was in government in our constituency.

Mr. Speaker, these are things that this government's doing. We are looking forward; we're not looking backwards. Can you imagine? Could you imagine COVID coming along had the NDP been in power? We got 1,000 more doctors in this province, 4,000 more nurses. Can you imagine what it would have been like under the NDP? First off, they would have shut everything down and all the businesses would have been closed. All the kids would have been sitting at home; none of them would have been playing sports. Absolutely disgusting. Absolutely disgusting, Mr. Speaker.

And then, Mr. Speaker, they have a hard time getting their facts right. Like here we have the Leader of the Opposition, who is a physician, and stood up in here in the House one day and talked about the children's hospital going under code black. What's code black, Mr. Speaker? Code black is a bomb threat. Code black is a bomb threat. Can you imagine all the thousands of people who are watching the legislative channel on TV that have kids in school going out there and looking and saying, holy cow, we got a bomb threat at the children's hospital, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, well we certainly got them chirping over there.

They don't want to admit the mistakes that they have been making and are continuing to make, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is going to be a little bit to do because I've been talking here fairly loud but I, you know, a couple of the members here brought up the different songs that we had. You know, there was the Johnny Cash song brought up by Indian Head-Milestone, and our member from Regina Gardiner Park was bringing up another song.

Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I don't have a song. I don't have actually all the words of the song. But you know, I'm going to put this towards the Leader of the Opposition. And it comes from a Janis Joplin song. It goes, "bye-bye, my baby, bye-bye." Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

An Hon. Member: — Encore. Encore. Sing it again.

The Speaker: — What can I say? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that is indeed a hard act to follow, but one thing I'll get, I think, members on both sides of the House to agree upon: I will not be singing in my reply. It's a good thing. People watching who know me think that's a good thing as well, but I may have to get some lessons at some point by my seatmate.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to take my place in the Legislative Assembly for what I believe the 18th time to respond to a budget. When I first arrived here, the budgets were presented by the NDP, and I think what I recollect, and I'm certainly willing to do some research on this, but I think the biggest tax increase was done by a minister from the NDP when he raised the PST from 7 per cent to 9 per cent. Andrew Thomson, those who have been here a long time will remember that.

But, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, what's happening today, I'm very pleased to be able to respond to the budget and to talk about the highlights and what it does for the province of Saskatchewan and for the constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove.

As is customary, I want to just give you a brief update on my family. My daughter, Paige, continues to further her education in Ontario at McMaster University. She's a swimmer there with the McMaster swim team, doing very well in her fourth year. My goodness, it's hard to believe it's four years she was there: first year; second year, came home for half the year; third year, home the whole time; and now fourth year, back in Hamilton but enjoying it very much. And competing in swimming and doing very well and enjoying her studies as well. And hoping for maybe a medical career in her future. So I'm very proud of her.

Our son, Carter, is working in Saskatoon with Brian Mallard & Associates, a financial planning firm that's very well respected in Saskatoon and Saskatchewan. And he is very much enjoying his career. He continues his studies. He finished his commerce degree. He did the Canadian Securities Course and then went on now to doing the chartered financial planner course. And we're very proud of him as well.

My wife, Trish, works for St. Paul's Hospital Foundation. I'm going to talk about foundations in general a little bit more in my speech a little bit later on. But she's a major gifts officer for St. Paul's Hospital, and talking to people and planting the seed with them about what they can do with their estates and with their wealth that they've created in their lifetime, and how they can give back to their communities and to the medical communities. And our hospital foundations do a great job. And Trish really enjoys that very, very much.

I want to thank my CA as well, my constituency assistant. I won't get into the best-one-in-the-province debate, but we work together very, very well. So to Brianne Toupin, thank you very much, Brianne, for all that you do each and every day for myself and for the constituents of Saskatoon Willowgrove.

As members have heard me say before, Saskatoon Willowgrove is one of the fastest growing constituencies in Saskatchewan. I kind of laugh when I hear members opposite saying Saskatchewan isn't growing enough. And I've been here long enough to know what the NDP record on growth is and how we're very, very proud of what has happened in the last 14 years in our province. And the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency is indicative of that.

I know it's going to change substantially. It's one of the largest constituencies in the province. And with the redistribution coming, it's always painful to lose constituents when that happens. But again it's part of our democratic process, and I know that they will be served well by whoever becomes their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in the area that I'll lose.

The vibrancy in the constituency extends right from the north in Evergreen, a brand new neighbourhood, home to many businesses and many new people to the province and the country. Aspen Ridge is another area that's growing substantially and it, combined with more established neighbourhoods like Erindale and Arbor Creek and East College Park and Briarwood, make up the constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove.

And also we have the brand new area of Brighton, which again is going to be . . . When it's full out, the area of Brighton itself will be as large as the city of North Battleford, you know, when it comes out. So it's an area of growth and it's indicative. And if members opposite, you know, want to see examples of growth that's taking place in Saskatchewan, they can certainly come to the Willowgrove constituency.

The Willowgrove constituency is home to many health care professionals, teachers, all kinds of professionals in general, and they really have an opportunity to contribute back to the city and to the province through their professional careers and through their volunteerism. Many of those professionals have given so much, as have all residents of Saskatchewan. But I want to really highlight the doctors and the nurses and the teachers and the grocery store workers and people that were on the front lines for the last two years, serving us each and every day and doing such a great job of doing that. And I know I could go on and on and mention individuals.

There's one individual I really do want to highlight, and that's Dr. Joseph Blondeau. I think many of you have heard him on

radio and television and the work that he's done as far as, well, going back to SARS [severe acute respiratory syndrome] and then COVID. And he's a constituent and he's in the media a lot, so many people have come to know him through media means. But he's not an alarmist. He's not a person that gets up there, you know, to have his personal profile increased, but he was very much talking daily about how Saskatchewan residents do the very best to keep themselves safe. And I want to highlight him in this speech as one of the constituents that have done so well to help us in so many ways.

Saskatoon Willowgrove has many new businesses. Many have had a tough time going through COVID, as they have across the province. But we had a wonderful time this past weekend, a couple of colleagues of mine. We went and had an opportunity to welcome a new business. It's called Lucky's Indian A La Carte restaurant. It's on McOrmond Drive. And the member from Saskatoon Northeast is good friends with the owners and he invited us, along with the member from Saskatoon Southeast and the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. It was a great celebration, not only of the entrepreneurship but of a new restaurant at this time. And it is somebody that's a new Canadian and really enjoying their entrepreneurship.

Many other exciting developments happening in the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency. A brand new apartment building. It's great to see cranes all over the skyline of the constituency. Ken Aches, a well-known developer, along with his partner and wife, Colleen Wilson, are building a wonderful apartment building, a state-of-the-art type of building for seniors, and we're just so pleased. With many home builders, homes are springing up across the constituency. And also we've got private health care clinics, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, all setting up in the constituency. And, Mr. Speaker, it is a wonderful, wonderful thing that's happening.

Every budget speech I like to draw on a few quotes, something that is sometimes humorous, or sometimes just tell you a little bit about the budgeting process. And I quote: "A budget is more than a series of numbers on a page. It is an embodiment of our values." That's been said many, many times. And I have another quote here: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much. It is whether we provide enough for those who have too little." And that's Franklin D. Roosevelt who said that. And certainly that's what this budget does. It takes into the account of those who have too little.

"Money is a terrible master but can be an excellent servant." That was a quote by P.T. Barnum from the Barnum and Bailey Circus. And it certainly is true. Money can be a terrible master but it can indeed be an excellent service. The poetess, Emily Dickinson, said, "Fortune befriends the bold." And, Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a bold budget. It takes bold steps to enhance the fortune of the people of Saskatchewan.

An investment in knowledge, Mr. Speaker . . . It's another quotation: "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." And that was by Benjamin Franklin. And of course what would be a speech without a quote from Yogi Berra who says, "A nickel just ain't worth a dime anymore." So that's true and brings a smile to a few faces, I'm sure.

Mr. Speaker, I live in the city of Saskatoon. It's a wonderful place

to live and my constituency is encompassed by the entirety in Saskatoon. I don't have any rural component to it, but it is a thriving area. The city itself is a city that's punching above its weight. It's a growing city that is becoming higher and higher in the list of growing cities in Canada. So it's always great to see cities thrive. And one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that the city is thriving is the revenue sharing that takes place, and it's one area I don't think we talk about enough is revenue sharing.

[15:00]

And I had an opportunity when I was first elected. I was the Finance critic, and Mr. Harry Van Mulligen for the NDP was the Finance minister. And I would get up here and I'd say, Mr. Minister, how come we can't have revenue sharing in Saskatchewan? And every year or every time I asked the question, the same thing. It's just impossible. It's very difficult to do. It just can't happen. It just doesn't happen.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what happened when Mr. Ken Krawetz became the Finance minister from this side of the House? He made revenue sharing happen. At that time the city of Saskatoon was receiving \$17 million a year. It was funding that didn't have any strings attached, and it was welcomed at the time. But, Mr. Speaker, fast-forward to today, to 2022, and the city of Saskatoon receives nearly \$50 million in revenue sharing. And again, I know, and in personal conversations with the mayor and with city councillors, they really appreciate that money because it gets many, many, many things done.

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is limited here so I better move along. But I want to share with members — and it was in the news today — I've had the opportunity to be appointed by the government to be a part of an advisory committee looking at a new arena and entertainment district in the downtown Saskatoon. It's something that adds to the vibrancy of a community of our province, and I certainly look forward to doing the work. I'm one of 17 people who will be on that committee.

As you know, I have an enthusiasm for projects like that. And I had a wonderful opportunity to chair the Mosaic build committee, and I'm very, very proud of our football stadium in this city. And I look forward to doing equally well in Saskatoon as we look at that.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons why I get so enthusiastic about facilities like that, as I said, my area is growing all the time. I see realtors, and some come to me to talk to me about the area. And they say that there's a list of things that people look for when they're coming to an area and they want to move to Saskatchewan or move to Saskatoon. Number one amongst that is schools. When people are looking to relocate to Saskatoon or Saskatchewan, they look for schools and the availability. Well, check. We've done very, very well in providing new schools. In the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency alone, we've had four new schools in just the last few years, and we're very, very proud of that.

The next reason why people come to an area and they're comfortable with relocating is the proximity to world-class health care facilities. Again, Mr. Speaker, check. We have that here in Saskatchewan and we're very, very pleased to have that in Saskatoon. And of course amongst that is the children's

hospital. I'll talk a little bit about that later.

The third thing is the availability of recreation, and again, check. We have our beautiful lakes and parks in Saskatchewan. I said it . . .

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order. I'm having troubles hearing the speaker. Order, please. Order.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm usually told that I'm too loud. I have too loud of a voice, but you know, it just happens. Some say they can hear me fine.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the other area . . . I'm going through a list of six things that people look to when they relocate to an area of growth, and that is an area that has a great and thriving sporting community. And certainly we have that in Saskatoon with the Rush and the Rattlers and the Saskatoon Blades, of course, and the Rush bringing lacrosse and the Rattlers bringing basketball. And also we have, you know, the possibility of a new soccer facility in Saskatoon as well, so that will be served. And again when those realtors are bringing people around to say, should we locate in Saskatoon or Saskatchewan, another big, big check.

Cultural activities are really important, and we have such a thriving cultural community in Saskatoon. And it's wonderful to see, and that draws people in. And also access by air is so important and I know that's something that we're working on as well.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have to move along. My time is getting away on me a little bit, but I want to talk a little bit about health care and how important it is to the province of Saskatchewan and to the constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove. \$4.9 million to expand nursing training seats by 150. And I have a lot of nurses that live in my constituency, a lot of doctors. We're so close to the Royal University Hospital that that's wonderful to see.

Mr. Speaker, \$15.2 million for urgent care centres in Saskatoon and Regina. And of course an increase of \$21.6 million to address those surgical wait-lists. And I'm very wanting to be open-minded on that. I know that we have some facilities here, but I want to look at private facilities as well and see what the innovation that the private sector can bring to Saskatchewan. \$3.5 million for physician recruitment and retention targeting family physicians. That's great to see. I think all members can agree on that. And \$12.5 million for 11 additional ICU beds. Ninety is the total for '22-23, moving up to 110, Mr. Speaker, for '24-25. That's a wonderful, wonderful thing to see. And how proud indeed we are.

I mentioned the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, Mr. Speaker. I don't have a lot of time to talk about it today but the SHA I think is doing a great job. I hear from constituents and I hear from people across the province because it is indeed a provincial hospital. So thank you to Brynn Boback-Lane and her team and the foundation. We certainly appreciate what the children's hospital is doing each and every day.

Mr. Speaker, moving on to education, spending across the province is increasing \$3.8 billion total, up more than \$47 million. And indeed that is a large, large number. As I mentioned earlier, you can't always build new schools every

year, but what this budget does also, put money into portables. I have high schools and elementary schools that are very, very large, over capacity, over capacity, over 100 per cent capacity, Mr. Speaker. But what the relocatables and the portables are able to do is to address that need and wait for the opportunity when new schools become available. And I know that will be coming.

I've had discussions with the Minister of Education and I know there's been a study done looking at where the next elementary and high schools will be. And I know that the constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove is very, very high on that list as work continues on planning for Aspen Ridge and Brighton in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. And this has happened before. You have schools like Dr. John Egnatoff and Father Robinson who are busting at the seams and then new schools were built. And that's just the sign of growth in an area, in a growing province, and a growing constituency.

Post-secondary education, \$4 million capital design funding for the Saskatoon campus renewal project of Sask Poly. It is a wonderful, wonderful thing to see that we're looking to the future. Sask Poly is more important than ever in our province as we want to educate our students and allow them to stay here and have careers in the trades.

I want to mention just very briefly about the graduate retention program. It's the most aggressive graduate retention program in the country. Members know that. I know members like myself hear from people. And when I go into the new neighbourhoods and go door knocking or talk to people, they bring it up. The kids that bought their first homes say, I couldn't have been able to do this if I didn't have the tax credits that were available. So, Mr. Speaker, you know our province is growing. But 75,000 graduates have claimed these credits over the last number of years, so I would say that that's a wonderful success story. \$27 million in student loans. A new design is funded in this budget as well and I'm just so pleased to see. I could go on and on in each of these areas, but you know, Mr. Speaker, we're all limited to what we can say.

An \$8 million increase, bringing total funds available to \$10 million provided for Creative Saskatchewan production grant program for film and television industry in our province. I think that is something that is very well received. I had an opportunity to work with a couple of individuals over the years, Ken Alecxe and Wally Start. They have been advocates for this industry and I know they're very, very excited about what the future brings and how Saskatchewan is going to be contributing more than ever to this burgeoning industry. It's great to see, with our sound stage here in Saskatchewan, and renaming it'll be exciting. The future is very, very bright.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about trade and export. Saskatchewan's favourable investment climate has resulted in \$13.6 billion in new private investment in major projects alone. And that's an extremely large number, Mr. Speaker, but that doesn't take into account all the spinoffs, all the services, and that's what's going to be happening in my constituency. It's on the extreme east side of Saskatoon and people from there were very, very happy to drive out to the BHP plant, for example, and to others, and to make their careers and do very well in that. It's expected to create 9,000 construction jobs and 2,330 permanent jobs. And I know many of those people will be residents of the

constituency of Saskatoon Willowgrove.

That's the very large side. I want to talk about the smaller side as well. I have many constituents that are exporters of honey and oats and wild rice, for example, and things like that. On a smaller scale but exporters nevertheless. And it's something that they're able to do here, working with the ministry and doing very well. You know, people like Moni Minhas. He has a very, very thriving business. Many of his workers live in my constituency.

And I want to highlight Utsang and Khyati Desai. They were nominees for Young Entrepreneurs of the Year. They're the master franchisees for BarBurrito and for Meltwich, and they've got some exciting new things on the way. And they are members of the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency as well.

We've heard a lot about helium, Mr. Speaker, in the legislature here. The Ministry of Energy and Resources is talking about it and how exciting it is. I have many executives and workers that are in the helium industry that are part of my constituency, and rare earth minerals as well. The processing facility is well under way in Saskatchewan, and it's just a wonderful opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say in general, the newcomers to Canada, the newcomers to Saskatchewan, to my constituency, they add so much, not only in a cultural way, but entrepreneurially as well. I'm so excited when I talk to new Canadians that are entrepreneurs and starting their businesses and finding their way and doing it. And it's happening, whether it's restaurants that I referenced earlier; trucking industry, one of the most successful truckers in Saskatchewan, SSA Trucking. Home builders are doing very well. Some of the best homes being built, or some of the finest, are done by new Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, in getting to the conclusion of my remarks, I want to talk very briefly about people in the community of Saskatoon that have done so much, both through COVID and leading us throughout COVID or beyond COVID: Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce president, Jason Aebig, for example; North Saskatoon Business Association, Keith Moen. Mark Arcand from the Saskatoon Tribal Council, myself and many colleagues have great discussion with him; Brent Penner, downtown business district; Tourism Saskatoon, Stephanie Clovechok; and many others, Mr. Speaker. Shawna Nelson.

Volunteers from the area include as well . . . Many have heard me talk about Brad Sylvester, of course. He operated the Canada Day celebrations for 30 years in Saskatoon. And just when he said it's time for somebody else to take over, what does he do? He starts volunteering at the Optimist Hill, a very new project in Saskatoon that's just great.

Mr. Speaker, I said that I wanted to make sure that I highlighted something different in every speech. I want to talk a little bit about health and community foundations. I want to highlight those that give back in this way. Lecina Hickie at St. Paul's Hospital Foundation; Steve Shannon at Saskatoon city foundation; Jennifer Molloy is very new at the RUH [Royal University Hospital] Foundation; and the Saskatoon Community Foundation, Carm Michalenko, Curtis Kimpton, and others. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell more about those stories, and I'll continue in a further speech sometime.

I just want to say that this is the second major time having to speak in this session. The first one was about our first day and talking about Ukraine. And since that time, I know many people have had a chance to see the speech and the speech of many others. And what Saskatoon Willowgrove constituents have done is contact me and say, hey, I've got my house, I've got a basement suite, I can put somebody up there. I've got a cabin at the lake that nobody is staying. I want to help. And businesses are saying, how can I contribute. So as each and every day as we think about our friends in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, we continue to just be very, very well rewarded by constituents that are wanting to help in that regard.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, my final statement, and I quote, "Without continued growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, compassion, and success have no meaning," says Benjamin Franklin. Mr. Speaker, to that end, this budget is indeed filled with meaning. Mr. Speaker, I will certainly not be supporting the amendment, but I will certainly be supporting the budget. And again, I appreciate the opportunity to take my turn to stand in this Legislative Assembly and make my comments. Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to be on my feet, and of course particularly so to enter into debate on this budget, the theme of which is back on track. I think what I liked most about this budget presentation, Mr. Speaker, is they've cut it out with all that "strong Saskatchewan" nonsense or tuned it down a bit. Good to see the back-patting and the bravado, you know, tuned down just that little bit. You know, is there strength in this province? Absolutely. There's so much strength in this province. People have stepped up in unimaginable ways, particularly over the last two years, Mr. Speaker. But a lot of that strength exists not because of this party, but despite it, Mr. Speaker. And I want to speak to that. And I want to get into the details.

You know, we're already . . . It's early days in my response, Mr. Speaker, and there's already some heckling. But you know, this government has been presiding over some of the worst social ills in the country, the worst social ills in the country. We have the highest rates of interpersonal violence. We have some of the highest child poverty rates, Mr. Speaker. We have HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] rates that dwarf everywhere else in the country, Mr. Speaker, diseases rearing their heads that should have been dealt with decades ago. A syphilis outbreak, Mr. Speaker. Some of the highest death-by-overdose numbers, and it was referenced earlier, some of the highest death by suicide numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Things are really bleak out there. They are really bleak out there. And I know it's not just in my constituency. I know we're not the only office getting calls on a daily basis — multiple calls, Mr. Speaker. It is our sacred duty in here to relieve that struggle, to do at least what we can. And I hear the minister chuckling over there when I use the term "sacred duty." The Minister for Energy chuckled. The entitlement, the arrogance, it's disgusting. It is our sacred duty. People voted for us to be here to be their voice here, to speak to their issues, to ease their hurt, to ease their struggle,

Mr. Speaker.

But what we see with this budget is a pile-on, Mr. Speaker — the mental health and addiction crisis, the poverty crisis of this province that feed our dead-end criminal justice system, our social services system, not to mention strain our front-line health care system — that will go unaddressed under this budget, Mr. Speaker.

This budget goes no distance. It certainly doesn't go far enough in building back from this government's botched handling of the pandemic. The highest death rates in the country. I know they don't like to talk about the global pandemic that we're coming out of anymore. They want to put it in the rear-view mirror, as they say. The highest death rates in the country. The preventable loss of far too many lives, that's what that was, Mr. Speaker. The worst handling of this pandemic in the country on the numbers. This isn't my opinion; this is a fact, Mr. Speaker. A total failure and no appetite from them for accountability. No willingness for some transparency to peek behind the curtain to see what went wrong, Mr. Speaker, to see, more importantly, what could we do better next time. Imagine.

And I'm not saying that these challenges were easy, Mr. Speaker. But we could have done better. That's the point. We could have done better, and I know that to be true because other jurisdictions did do it better, Mr. Speaker. They did. Why didn't we? That's all we want to know. People deserve to know, mostly for the reason that we don't want to repeat history, Mr. Speaker. What is the Sask Party government so afraid that we will find in that inquiry?

This government is accumulating these last-place titles that I referred to earlier. I can see why they've walked back this strong Saskatchewan rhetoric, Mr. Speaker. It was increasingly hollow, it was increasingly out of touch, and people were beginning to see the weakness in that false strength. Because this is a government that loves to take credit for everyone else's successes, but when it comes time to take some responsibility, they're quite willing to point their finger somewhere else.

And it's not just the social outcomes, Mr. Speaker. It's not just the social outcomes that should have us all flinching. Mr. Speaker, it's not just the handling of the pandemic that should have us ashamed. The economic outcomes are just as bad. The lowest minimum wage in the country. You know what actually invigorates an economy, Mr. Speaker, is wages, wages so people can actually contribute, can actually put money back into the economy. You know what's not good for an economy? When people are scraping by. And it's no wonder that we have some of the lowest growth in the country. I think in fact the lowest, Mr. Speaker, the highest rates of out-migration.

These are the numbers, Mr. Speaker. This is not my opinion. These are the facts. The fact remains that fewer and fewer people see a future for themselves in this province. And if that isn't damning, I don't know what is.

Saskatchewan families needed a budget that would offer them relief, a budget that would stop the brain drain, Mr. Speaker. Instead, families, skilled workers, young people are voting with their feet. And it's a shame, Mr. Speaker. And that's to say nothing of the good people that this government has actively

driven away, such as Scott Livingstone, an incredible leader in our province that guided us through some of the darkest days.

Here we have 32 regressive taxes and fee hikes, a residential property tax increase that will hit folks on fixed incomes the hardest — seniors, struggling families who have already seen their cost of living skyrocket, Mr. Speaker.

Cuts to the classroom. Just when kids need investments as they're coming out of two years being in a global pandemic that interfered with their learning, with their mental health, as the members opposite love to talk about but won't put up the investments to address, Mr. Speaker.

We saw a wonderful investment from the federal government in child care and early learning, a wonderful investment. But this government took it as an opportunity to cut back their own dollars in child care. And I'll have more to say on that in a moment.

Let's talk about the dishonesty for a moment, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that promised it would not increase taxes. This is a government that promised, they campaigned on balancing the budget. They struggle to tell the truth, Mr. Speaker. They've what? Tripled the debt? Squandered a boom? I don't think they've balanced a budget since 2016, Mr. Speaker. And slapped a tax and fee hike on all of the events and goods that struggling families rely on. I mean, that's what this is.

If the myth of fiscal conservatism isn't dead in this province, Mr. Speaker . . . You know, I am a believer in stimulus spending. I believe our party actually campaigned on it. We told the truth. If you make smart investments, you get the economy chugging, Mr. Speaker. You get people spending money in their communities. They can afford to buy a house, get an education, eat out once in a while, go back and get training, retrofit their houses, enrol their kids in activities, treat themselves to nice things once in a while, Mr. Speaker. But those investments have to be smart. They have to be preventative. They have to be forward thinking. They have to be evidence based, and they have to be solutions oriented. And we're not seeing that in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government that just keeps pouring resources into the wrong end of the system, and it is now paying for those investments on the backs of struggling families with this budget, and during a resource boom, Mr. Speaker, during a boom.

So it's bad news on the spending side. It's also bad news on the revenue side, Mr. Speaker, because we see no commitment to bringing in revenue in smart and sustainable ways. Taxes and fees that don't take into consideration a person's income and their ability to pay are destructive. Instead of taxing wealthy corporations, wealthy individuals like we see in this House — like we see in this House, Mr. Speaker, individuals like us, Mr. Speaker — this government is trying to spin a story of success on the backs of regular working families who are being squeezed from all sides, families who needed a lifeline and they got an anchor, Mr. Speaker.

And you know what's also really distressing about this government, about this budget? As oil prices are absolutely soaring, none of that money is going back to the people, Mr. Speaker. None of that money is going into investments in our

tremendous renewable potential, which would create thousands of jobs now and sustainably into the future. Instead, we continue to look the other way and subsidize that industry, Mr. Speaker.

And I hear the members heckling. And I'd really like to know, you know, how much has this government's failure to update the legislation around payments on lease lands and surface rights cost in forgone revenue. How much has it cost in damages, not to mention the farmers who can't work that land? How much of that revenue would have paid for our classrooms, for seniors to age in dignity? You always heckle us about, how are you going to pay for it? So I'm telling you. I'm telling you.

This government is on track to squander yet another boom. They have forgotten that this is the people's money, Mr. Speaker. These are profits derived from our shared labour, our shared birthright, Mr. Speaker, from resources literally derived from our shared land. Resources like potash and oil that developed through marvellous natural processes that have happened over tens and hundreds of millions of years, and they act like it's their own personal piggy bank, Mr. Speaker. No consideration of the future, no consideration of our children, of our children's children. No plan, Mr. Speaker.

So there it is, back on track. How are we going to get back on track when we are facing down an opioid crisis that is taking our loved ones in ever greater numbers, Mr. Speaker? Every month this province sets a new death record, and the Premier ignores the evidence showing that safe consumption sites saves money and saves lives. Shame, Mr. Speaker. This crisis is touching everyone, families across this province. This crisis is cutting like a scythe through our communities, and I know it's not just my community, Mr. Speaker. I know it's not just mine. And this government won't even reward the demonstrated track record of a nationally recognized organization like Prairie Harm Reduction, despite the fact that their own internal memos tell them that these services save money and lives, money and lives, Mr. Speaker.

If that isn't a perfect encapsulation of the failure of leadership, of the rot, I just struggle to comprehend it, Mr. Speaker, and I know I'm not the only one. All because like what? All because this right wing obsession with personal responsibility, Mr. Speaker.

Have you seen what crystal meth does to people? Do you know what big pharma has done in terms of the opioid crisis, of making these drugs maximally addictive, maximally available? Do you really think that people can overcome this alone? They can't, Mr. Speaker. They need your help. They need this government's help, and that's okay.

When did it become . . . When did we start believing that it was a moral failing to need help, to say, look, I've fallen down and I need my community's help. I need you to help lift me up. I need the government to throw me a lifeline. When did that become a bad thing, Mr. Speaker?

[15:30]

And if you really think it's all about personal responsibility, why are you here? Your own internal memo tells you to do this. It saves money and lives. Why are you here? Why don't you go back to corporate law or selling cars or owning pharmacies? I

mean it. Those are perfectly honourable professions. Why are you here — legislators, policy-makers — if you don't care? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm saying that you, in your privileged position of being a lawmaker of the Government of Saskatchewan have an opportunity to change and fix this policy. You had an opportunity with this budget to fund Prairie Harm Reduction \$1.3 million to run a 24-7 consumption site and you chose not to. That's what I'm saying.

The Speaker: — Member, just remind you to speak through the Speaker, please.

Ms. Conway: — I apologize. I'll direct all my comments through you, Mr. Speaker.

So many missed opportunities with this budget, Mr. Speaker, and that's just one. It's a particularly egregious one because for many it's a death sentence, Mr. Speaker.

But there are other opportunities that were missed with this budget to save money and lives, and you don't need to take it from me. I'd like to read a statement put out by SOFIA House. SOFIA House runs second-stage shelter beds here in Regina, Mr. Speaker:

We are disappointed to learn that the provincial government has again decided not to provide operational funding for second-stage shelters like SOFIA House. Saskatchewan continues to be one of only two provinces in Canada that does not provide operational funding for second-stage shelters despite the fact that Saskatchewan has the highest interpersonal violence rates of all provinces and that thousands of people are turned away from crisis shelters on a regular basis due to the lack of space. There continues to be no funding available to support long-term housing for those experiencing violence. SOFIA House continues to rely on fundraising donations and contributions from our community to fund our operations without financial support from the provincial government.

How can we get back on track, Mr. Speaker, when people don't have a place to live, when shelters are full, and we can't even get it together to fund second-stage shelters in the province with the highest interpersonal violence rates, Mr. Speaker.

Not only do we not fund it, we won't even pitch in a few dollars to Avana when they're building a unit with, I believe, more second-stage units than we already have in our entire city. How do we get back on track with that approach, Mr. Speaker? We have no housing plan despite that these investments would save money across all ministries. And again, you don't have to take it from me. Here's a quote from the CEO [chief executive officer] of Avana, one of the most successful companies in Canada, based out of right here in Regina, Mr. Speaker:

"Every single year, [every single year] we have approached . . . [the provincial government] to try and work together like we have the city and the federal government and you can obviously see how successful we've been in that."

The article continues:

"It's just a space that we really needed to step up because,

quite frankly, the provincial government has not."

Denouden feels so strongly in this that she said her family has committed \$1.2 million in operating funding to Sofia House in Regina and \$2 million to the YWCA.

"The need to do that wouldn't exist if our provincial government were really standing up and serving the most vulnerable population, women and children, in our province."

Denouden doesn't believe the issue is a priority for the provincial government.

The highest rates of interpersonal violence, of interpersonal homicide, disproportionately impacting women of course, and disproportionately impacting Indigenous women of course, Mr. Speaker. So when we talk about racism on this side of the House, it's not about whether you're kind to your Indigenous colleague, and I'm really glad to hear that you are. What we're talking about is systemic racism, Mr. Speaker. And it's about not addressing the policies that disproportionately impact Indigenous communities, and that is because we are not seeing this government make those a priority, Mr. Speaker.

How are we going to get back on track with just an extra buck a day, Mr. Speaker? And as my colleague from Regina University pointed out, a buck a day that this government has budgeted for by basically looting labour market development programs, Mr. Speaker. How many buildings have to burn down because people can't find a warm place to live? How many families have to be evicted, Mr. Speaker? Things were bad before SIS, but now we have a program, the brainchild of the current Health minister, Mr. Speaker, that everyone, everyone says is a horrible failure, including your own income assistance workers in the Ministry of Social Services, Mr. Speaker.

Our Finance minister's response? If you can't hack it out there on less than, you know, half the poverty line, less than half the poverty line, you're making bad choices. That old personal responsibility trope again, Mr. Speaker. We saw it pop up a lot during the pandemic. It's practically their religion, Mr. Speaker. And it's so convenient because it really absolves them of all responsibility. It excuses all their bad decisions in the past, and all of their inaction going forward.

Fuel is up — what? — a buck seventy, a buck eighty? Forty per cent from last year. Food is up 7 per cent from last year.

Rent has not come down as predicted, Mr. Speaker. There is one apartment building in Regina that rents room for the paltry shelter allowance you get under SIS. One apartment building. And I wouldn't want to live there, and I wouldn't want anyone else to live there, particularly anyone with children, Mr. Speaker.

But the Finance minister's response is, it's your fault. Do better. Having a tough time? Toughen up. Can't hack it? Fix yourself. That's what this government's response is, Mr. Speaker. And for all that talk of personal responsibility, they are not giving people the tools they need to make change, to have actual choices, to embrace the autonomy they so badly desire, Mr. Speaker. Equality is the rising tide that lifts us all, but under Scott Moe's Saskatchewan, it is every man, woman, and child for themselves.

Sorry.

How will we get back on track when this government thinks nothing of condemning children to a second-class existence by their fifth birthday? Because it's not just adults on this program, Mr. Speaker. There are one in four children living in poverty in this province. And this government might believe that, you know, folks on SIS are there because they're lazy or they're not working hard enough. They're not making the right decisions. But what about their children? They have no say in this, Mr. Speaker.

And the failure to invest in those children is going to cost us a lot. They're going to struggle to thrive in the classroom. They're going to struggle to stay out of trouble. They're going to struggle to remain healthy. And they are going to struggle to join the workforce. And so the cycle continues. And so the cycle continues, Mr. Speaker.

How are we going to get back on track when there is nothing significant in this budget for the many community-based organizations who work so hard to keep the worst at bay? They have struggled so much through this pandemic, in this post-pandemic, this post-SIS, this post-cuts to the rental supplement, this post-highest inflation rates in many years, Mr. Speaker. And you know, a 2 per cent increase, it doesn't cut it, Mr. Speaker.

How are we going to get back on track when each time the federal government gets something right, like they did with this historic investment in child care, each time they do that, the province uses it as an opportunity to take away with the other hand? Instead of shoring up this investment, instead of excelling, instead of making things great in this area, Mr. Speaker, this government is happy to use it as a pretext to make cuts to child care — the subsidy especially. And that subsidy is so important. Why not expand it? Why not make child care completely accessible to struggling families, Mr. Speaker? Why don't we use that money to give all children a good start in life, to give them the tools to break the cycles that I referred to earlier, Mr. Speaker?

How can we get back on track when we have a Premier who feeds division? And I think all to distract from his record, Mr. Speaker. As his popularity was plummeting, he began to court the far right in this province — cancel all health restrictions, tweet about how vaccines don't work, reach further and further to the right. Dig deeper and deeper into the gutter to stitch together a coalition. It worked, Mr. Speaker. You know, the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, O'Toole, he's no more. Jason Kenney appears to be not far behind. The Premier has managed to save his skin, but he paid a heavy price.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I think I'll wrap up my comments with one final area. The pandemic exposed what 15 years of Sask Party cuts, privatization, and neglect leaves us with — very little to fall back on in a time of crisis, Mr. Speaker. And unfortunately this budget is the worst of both worlds. The Sask Party has offered no meaningful relief to struggling families and there is no course correction. This is an embrace of the status quo, a status quo that wasn't working before the pandemic, let alone that will help us build as we're coming out of one.

This budget is nothing more than a plan to keep pouring resources into the wrong end of the system, and pay for this on the backs of struggling people during a resource boom, Mr.

Speaker. The Sask Party is growing the debt. It's not spending smart. It's imposing regressive taxes and fees when people are struggling more than ever. They're not positioning Saskatchewan for the future economy. They're not tackling the looming challenges of our day. So I will be voting against the motion, Mr. Speaker, and I will be supporting the amendment put forward by the member for Regina Rosemont. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in, give my response to the budget. I've done a lot of thinking about this. It's amazing how we get drawn into the challenges that families and our constituents and a lot of them in the province are feeling right now. They're struggling to make ends meet.

I think about a lot of First Nations. I think about the elders. I think about their stories, about how they're struggling to pay the bills. They just don't know where they're going to get their next dollars from to just . . . whether it's medication, whether it's pay the rent, buy food. And you hear it; you see it. You go to a store and you see people outside, and they're struggling. I've seen a lot of people with addictions. A lot of them are Indigenous. I have my own family who struggle with addictions.

This province is supposed to be a great province. It's supposed to take care of the most vulnerable. I've said this before in this House. You are . . . You have a big majority. I give you that. I've heard many times in this House, and I understand. I've said it's about back and forth. And I get drawn into it like anyone else, but I get woke up every evening and reminding myself, and morning as I say my meditation, and I ask for guidance by my higher power, my Creator. And he makes me wonder why I do what I do. He asks me, treat people the way you're supposed to.

But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I do get drawn into it when I see the struggles in our province of so many. And I hope, you know, that I've come here representing the Cumberland constituency, many northern people, many First Nations. Many of my grandchildren are First Nations. I hope that this government will respond when they're hearing the issues from our northern leaders, our First Nations, our Métis, our municipal leaders — those people that know what's going on back home in their communities, our municipal leaders. I know that they have their meetings. I know they reach out to the ministers. The ministers are very powerful. I understand that.

[15:45]

I probably will never get to be a part of cabinet to try to make the difference to help people . . . [inaudible] . . . I wanted to come here. And that's okay. I have done all I can and will continue to fight for people. As a person who's very proud to be Métis, an individual who has a disability, growing up I'd have never thought I'd have the honour to serve in this House.

My grandfather taught me one thing: "Doyle, the Creator . . . you will have these other strengths. You will have them." And he has given me strength. And one strength is to try to . . . I struggle. I'll be honest, Mr. Speaker. I struggle with getting up in this Assembly. I watch how gifted some are — the response, how they answer the questions. And I have struggles. I have a disability. You know, at times I was heckled. And I get all that.

It's part of the vicious game. I'm here. I run. I get re-elected.

But there are many challenges facing Saskatchewan when it comes to . . . I think of mental health or addictions or suicides. And I will continue to be an advocate. I will do all I can to support families that come to this Assembly.

You know, I'm a little hurt yesterday. You know, to think that somebody would come into this Assembly — it is their Assembly — and not get recognized by a minister, not get recognized by their MLA, a proud Métis man.

But that's okay. Sometimes . . . I don't get to pick. The Premier picks who's going to serve in this Assembly and who's going to be the minister. I understand it. Whoever has the most seats, they get to appoint those ministers. But I also know that in the backbenches are some good people of that government. And some day I hope some of those good people will move forward — not all of you, trust me — but there are some I think who truly, truly have an understanding and a passion and want to make change. And I hope someday the Premier will make those changes and to say, we've got to take care of all the residents of Saskatchewan, all the people, First Nations, Métis.

My colleague from Saskatoon Centre, very strong First Nation woman, a residential survivor, speaks the truth . . . I sometimes am unsure whether I'm comfortable to back and support. But today I can tell you, no more will I sit back and allow people to make her feel not welcome in her Assembly to represent the people that have asked her to represent them. I will no longer sit back and allow that to happen. I will do all I can to do and show people that we have to stop racism. There is a difference, but it is widespread. We've got a problem in our province, and I'm hoping we can change things. And the government has an opportunity. We as MLAs, elected officials, we can make a difference. We can make people feel welcome in this Assembly.

You talk about a budget. And I hear you guys, just an amazing amount of money. And I've actually . . . It was interesting because the Education minister, I give him credit, you know. I says to the Education minister, I said, hey, he'll know how many numbers in \$30 billion of debt. And it took him a while. I was watching him. You know, he was counting and he was counting.

And finally I thought, okay, how many is it? Because I wasn't even sure of that. But he'll know because I know him, you know. I know he'd know. And so I finally had to write it on the back of a paper to actually look at it and make sure I had it right, you know. And man, was there ever a lot of them, eh? We couldn't even count them together. We were trying to figure it out, but we didn't. But . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That will be our homework, he said. We're going to figure it out. But that's a lot of debt.

But you also, as a government and a province, have lots of money that we spend each year. And I can tell you, I've got a few calls from a few First Nation leaders, Métis leaders, just talking, our northern leaders. They do what they have to do, and I give them credit. They have so much pressure, you know. And I'll give credit where credit is due. And there are some of them that fight. They fight hard for the people they represent. And they know they have to work with the government. But I'm proud when they stand up and hold you accountable, because I've watched some

of them hold you accountable. I've watched some saying they're not going to accept this anymore; they want change.

They need to have the resources. They need the supports of a government, and no longer blaming them for COVID as they were blamed for not doing enough. And there's different areas where they need to have government listen to them. And you guys announced certain changes.

And I know there's certain ministers who hold the portfolio. I think the Minister for First Nations and Métis relations, also the same member responsible for Northern Affairs, I believe he's also responsible for truth and reconciliation. I hope some day that file will take the respect and the good work that it deserves. I truly mean that. I hope so.

There are many challenges in our province. I have my doubts sometimes too, wondering, well how do we fix things? What do we do? I watch the heckling. And like I said to you, I get into it, and I can get into it pretty good too. And sometimes I leave here not always feeling good about myself. You know, why did you get pulled into it, Doyle? Why are you pulling people into it, Doyle?

We're asked to come here and we're asked to represent the people and be honourable, and I understand that. You know, I've listened to some leave here in this Assembly. They've gone on and they've decided to leave, and maybe they go on back to different professions or, you know, they retire. And I've said good-bye to some of them, and some of them actually I've had a lot of respect for. They've earned that and I say that. Not all have earned it and all will not get it. It's not just given; it's earned. And I think about that. And some of them talk about making sure, you know.

And I do this for myself: did I do all I can for the people I said I would represent? In my critic roles, have I done all I can to do the right thing, to raise it with government, to try to be respectful, try to be, here's the situation, here's what's going on? Have I done that? And I know my higher power makes sure that . . . And that's what I want to do. And I want to one day leave here knowing I've done all I can, and I'll be okay with that. And that's what I want.

But for today there are many files that the government needs to fix. Like you can't keep sitting back. And I know the backbenchers, I'm sorry to say, some of you, you do your parts. I understand that you're told what to do. But there is a cabinet has a lot of power. The cabinet has so much power. I also know, you know, you get to have your say as members, backbenchers they're called, and some are a little further than others.

But you know, sometimes I chuckle about it because I think, hey, that one actually wouldn't be bad for a minister. Yeah, that one. This one I know will not make it. I hope not anyway. I don't want to wish him any bad luck, but I got to mention this, you know. I've heard him yelling and I've seen the member of Rosemont, you know, doing what he can. He kind of looks at him. And I don't know if I agree with that, but anyway it is the theatre and I get it. But I'm hoping at the end of the day, he can yell and do whatever the member wants. Maybe he will get part of cabinet.

I think that member knows who I'm talking about. Oh, he's

staring at me so maybe he wants me to make sure. Okay, I was talking about the member from Regina Walsh Acres. That's the member I was talking about. Yells and does what he does. And you know, maybe at the end of the day he'll get, you know, to be in the front benches where cabinet sits.

But there'll be maybe some of you members, backbenchers, I think some day . . . I hope the Premier when he makes his shuffles he will, you know, take a look at you all and see your part and give you a chance, because I think some of you truly you have the heart. And I think you can understand what some of the challenges of our . . . The residents, not only in my constituency but in your own constituencies, are suffering. And I hope, you know, that will happen for you, that you'll get to be a part of that. And maybe you can make some of the changes, especially when it comes to mental health with our children and our grandchildren.

The addiction that I see going on in our province, it's a crisis. And I know I'll do all I can to advocate, and I wish there was more money in this budget as a crisis.

And I watched your government. I've seen when you have had fires, forest fires, and the government has responded with dollars to emergency response to get those fires under control. And that's a good thing when the province does that. That is a good thing. And on behalf of northern people where the fires are, I thank the government. You're taking care of the people. I also see flooding going on sometimes. And I see the government respond as an emergency, and it takes resources and it takes care of the flooding. And it's a good thing.

And then I see droughts happening to our farmers who do so much. And I know that, you know, you heckle us so much that, you know, we own the farmers; we can do whatever we want to the farmers. I've heard members say, heckle at us. I get it. We own the farmers and we can do whatever, tax them, do whatever, and they'll still vote us. I get that and that's fine, you know. That's fine.

But those dollars that I'm talking about that you would spend in an emergency, in a budget, and you would allocate those dollars because there's flooding or drought or fires, and then once you deal with the crisis, those resources get moved somewhere else for next time. And that makes sense and I give credit to government. They do that. And that's the credit you're going to get. You take care of the people and that's good.

You have a crisis right now when it comes to addictions, mental health, and suicides. And I would hope you would respond to the crisis. Put the resources in now, and maybe some day we can say, hey, people have got the treatment and they got the help they needed. And they can get on with their life and be a part. I've said that before and I'm going to say it again for a reason. When somebody has an addiction . . . And I've watched this and I've talked to people and they struggle and they go to treatment. They come out and they're doing okay. And maybe for some reason they go back and they're not having a good life, but they know that, you know, "I'm going to reach out for help again," and they do that.

And when they get told, you know what; here you go; I'm sorry but we would love to help you but unfortunately the counsellors

. . . And they do great work. Front-line workers do a great job. And then they turn around and let them know. So they say to them, you know what; we can get you in maybe four or five months. When somebody has a relapse and needs the help, they want the help now, and that's important.

So your budget has totally, in my mind, when it comes to a file that I'm passionate about, the critic, and honoured to serve Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition as the critic for Mental Health and Addictions, your budget has failed many families. And I hope those families come here every day. Every day that we sit, I hope families will come here who have suffered a loss from overdose, from suicide, from mental health, the challenges.

And every day they'll come here, because I'll do everything I can to advocate for that because I think, unfortunately, with all the money you had . . . And you talked about this long plan in which you had this whole process of making these plans, and it took long. I think the Minister of Health might have said that. I want to be clear. I'm going to check that but I think it was, it's a very long process of getting to this budget and announcing. You guys just think he said that we'd just do it.

So you've known all the crises going on. COVID has made it worse with mental health and addictions. And you had an opportunity to truly try to help families, those individuals, kids, those individuals struggling. And unfortunately you chose not to. As we've said, the overall health budget last year was 7.5. This year it's 7.3. You know, how is that you're going to go . . . And then you want to say you're putting I guess more money in. But you put more money into health, but you didn't prioritize the mental health and addictions more. And unfortunately we are in a crisis.

So I can go on talking about the different things that are, you know, and the good things. I want to say this because I've had La Ronge leadership, many people sign a petition for long-term care. And I think I've heard some members on the government side talk about the money that came into, for La Ronge. And on behalf of the hard-working people of La Ronge, who have lobbied hard, who have pushed hard, I say on their behalf, I thank them for the hard work they did to put pressure to get the government to finally do the right thing.

[16:00]

So there, you did a good thing. You did a good thing, because the people had to pull you a bit, but you did it. And that's good. We hope to see a building soon. I mean maybe I'll be in there, but we hope to see it. Like we hope to see it. And I know people back home don't want to go south. They would like to stay in their home community like many of us do, you know, so stay home.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, there's been many challenges in our province. And I know the government, you've got a lot of people looking at you and asking for help because you are the government. You are the government. You are supposed to help the people. When the people need help, you're supposed to be there for them. That's why you've been given such a large majority. Like man, look at Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. There's only . . . I think the Finance minister counted us as the member from Rosemont was actually making a response. She was counting us and she went, one, two, three, four. And I was

kind of watching her going, okay, I get it. And I understand that. She can count. She was trying to make me . . .

But what I would like to do with her counting is, will she please make sure when she's counting, that she makes sure the files that leaders — municipal leaders, our rural leaders, our First Nation, our Métis leaders, those organizations, front-line workers in health that are doing a great job — that she's listening to them and helping them with their numbers to make sure they get the support and help they need. Because there's so many in this province are doing the hard work. They are, and I give them credit.

And yes, we should honour all our health care workers, our leaders. They've done the work, our First Nations, our Métis leaders. We should thank them for the good work. But the government should be willing to hear them and work with them.

School divisions, they're struggling. They need more help. And I know the government always likes to say to us, oh, you opposition, you spend all the money; you want us to spend more money, more money; where do you want us to get it? Well there's been a few projects that you guys have spent a lot of money on — GTH [Global Transportation Hub]. I was going to get the whole list and go over it all and then I thought, no, Doyle, try to be more positive. Give them a chance to fix things. So I'm hoping you guys will have that chance to look and fix some of the problems.

And we'll continue, I promise you this. Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition will continue to remind you. We will work with the many citizens of our good province that have concerns. We will bring to the floor of the Assembly and we will let you know. I know they will, and I know some of them will directly go to the ministers and to members opposite, but we will continue to bring the concerns forward.

I hope at the end of the day, honestly, when you guys all sit around and you look at, you know, what it is as a government you're doing, the backbenchers, I go back to you. I hope you can put some pressure on the minister, the cabinet, to remind them, you know — they make the big decisions, I get it — that you'll have some input and you can put some pressure on them. Because I'm telling you, there's a lot of people in our good province, not only in my constituency that I represent, not only in the members' opposite constituency, but the government's backbenchers, in your constituencies, there are a lot of people struggling. And I hope you will do all you can to let cabinet know where the issues are.

I kind of think I've taken up most of my time that I should have. But again, in closing I would just like to say to my family, to the staff, I thank you for all the support you give me. To the good people, you know, of our province, I know you're struggling. I know it's hard. I watch the tears as people are trying to pay for stuff, as they're trying to just balance, keep their power on. Power bills are so high. They're struggling.

And the last thing I'll say and then I'm going to conclude, the thing that people wanted the most was some relief with the cost of living. Just some relief, something from the government saying, we're going to help you. We hear you. Seniors, families struggling, single families, whether it's a single family with a dad

and kids or a mom and kids, we're going to help you. The most vulnerable, we're going to help you. You know, and that's what I hope this government would do, would help them. And they were looking for that.

But unfortunately what they got is 32 more fees, taxes, and just more burden put on them. I just don't, I don't understand it. And my colleagues have been better at expressing that than I have. And they have listed it off, and I give them credit. They have talked about it.

So with that, I'll say . . . You know, I could go on with a few other things. And you know, I'm going to say this because I know we had a by-election, and the gentleman from Athabasca has won. And I welcomed him, and I said, congratulations. And that's the right thing to do. I know I'm supposed to do that.

But you know, I looked at the numbers of turnout of voters and, man, was that ever low. And it's probably COVID. Maybe there's other reasons why it happens. We'll see. I know a general election will come in 2024, and I think at that time, at that time the good people of Athabasca and the North will decide who truly has their interests.

And there's a lot of things that have been shut down by this government in the North. I know the member that used to be there from Athabasca, the member who has now left and moved on. He tried to run for that . . . What do you guys call that? Liberal coalition? Oh okay, and the same Liberals-ND coalition that you guys keep putting your hand out to get money. "Oh, give us more money." And I hope that eventually stops and they start giving their money to the organizations and the leaders, First Nations, Métis leaders to do the good work. That's where I'm hoping they're going to do that. And maybe that'll happen.

But having said that, I'm going to conclude now, Mr. Speaker. I guess the member from Athabasca, you know, has a lot of work to do. And I wish him well; I mean that. Highway 55, you know, I think, Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. I mean, there's a list of things that were cut by this government, and I wish him well — NORTEP [northern teacher education program] program — I wish him well as he lobbies with the ministers and he pushes for more for his constituents. But for the North, I just wish him well. And I might even reach with him once in a while and have a coffee and say, hey here's some more issues that you can fight with this and work with.

So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I'm prepared to just conclude my remarks. And I want to thank everyone for giving me an opportunity and for not heckling as bad as you could have. So with that, I will just say thank you for that. And I'll just conclude my remarks. And I will not — oh yeah, yeah, I know you guys wanted to hear that — I will not be supporting the budget, but I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Lawrence: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. After those two, I'm not sure where to go with this except say, wow. Just wow. And I'm going to move on a totally different note because that's a hard act to follow with some of the stuff that was mentioned.

I'm going to continue on with my thanks. I get up here often and I got to first of all do my thank yous. And something I haven't done for a long time, and I'm not sure why, is I haven't thanked God. I haven't thanked him for a long time for giving me the ability to serve. So with his strength, I think I'll be able to get through this.

Then I want to thank of course the people of Moose Jaw, who now for three times have found confidence in me and our government for representing them at this level. And it is still truly an honour. I drive up here and occasionally I'll send out a Facebook post, and it's a picture of the building. And I cannot believe the honour I have, working for the people of Moose Jaw in this building.

Last time I . . . This is not in any specific order, but last time I forgot to thank my co-worker, my constituency assistant, Simone Gemmell. And contrary to what some of the folks say, she is the best because she has to put up with me. So if you guys that know me well, yeah, she has to put up with me and she does a great job with that. And I want to thank Simone for taking care of me through this time, taking care of the people of Moose Jaw.

I get stopped on the street and in the store because now I'm — even with the long hair and the beard — I'm recognizable and people will go, "Thank you. Your assistant, I don't remember her name, helped me, helped us. Walked us through this. Got us what we need." She helped people that weren't able to download their app for the virus. She would walk them through that process because there was a lot of our elderly folks that were vaccinated, but were not necessarily computer-literate or had a smart phone. So she would help them through that process. Cranked it off, get them all set up, and away they go . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah. Yeah, well there's some of us here on this side that are seniors and some that are getting close.

Next I want to thank all of the people in the caucus office, and I've got a few special shout-outs there. First of all, there's a couple of Moose Javians in there, Chris and Lee. I want to thank you guys for the great work you do in research and finding me the notes that I need for stuff like this. John, for his leadership of caucus, trying to keep all us backbenchers, as they call us, in line but works with us as well. Kim, Kim and her ability to do that social media, or do the media stuff that, the print media and all that, help us put that together, help our CAs with that. And, Karalee, when you walk into the office you always see Karalee. And even if she's on a difficult phone call, as soon as that phone is set down, she's got a huge smile on her face saying, hi. So thanks for that. And then we've got our new folks in there. We got Troy and Nulee and Leke. And as we go on, I'm getting to know you guys pretty good and it's fun working with you.

Now my family. As some of you who follow me on social media will know, we also had an addition to our family. I had a grandson, another grandson born to me. So that's five now I have. I have three in Moose Jaw and two in southwestern Manitoba. And that's the part of Manitoba that keeps trying to separate and join Saskatchewan. So he's in the right part of the province.

And my boys, we've got Geoffrey, Dylan, and Ryan. My boys are always there, always got my back, always phoning to check up on dad, see how's he doing. And my grandkids, I occasionally get my grandkids by myself. And this past weekend I took

Jordison, Jaxton, and Attica to the hockey game. And I had Oliver, my service dog, with me helping keep me in line while I kept my grandkids in line.

And there's something about that being a parent is for the young people because being 56 years old and trying to keep up with an 8-, a 7-, and a 5-year old was all I could do, and at the hockey game. And by the way, the Warriors, they beat Saskatoon soundly that day. I don't think Saskatoon even got a goal. Shut them out.

We covered my kids Geoffrey, Dylan, Ryan. Oh, we've also got almost step-parents in there. So we got Kayleigh and Derrick, who are co-parenting with my son Dylan. And we have Dylan's new partner, Monica. So I want to give a shout-out to them, because getting them, even though they're extended, they're still part of the family because they're there with my grandkids. And I need to mention the great work that they do with my grandkids.

Now mom and dad. And mom and dad, I get out to visit them as often as I can. And now I have an excuse with a brand new grandson and my granddaughter in south of Melita. And if you follow Highway 39 down, it goes right through Estevan and then Highway 18 all the way to Manitoba. So it gives me the opportunity to visit my mom and dad who are in the Minister of Social Services' riding. And I know we've talked about it before. We both grew up, we know each other, I went to school with her older sister. I'm not sure how much older she is, but I know she's a young, young, strong woman from Estevan doing a fantastic job.

[16:15]

Where are we going now? I'm trying to avoid being negative, but I do have to throw out a special thank you to the chamber of commerce over this entire COVID period. When COVID first hit and everything shut down, Rob and his staff — oh, why can't I remember her name? — Rob set up, and it was a really good idea, it was Zoom. And we had Zoom meetings every week and sometimes it was twice a week. And we were trying to figure out how they would help those struggling businesses like our restaurants and some of the families that were struggling.

They came up with that . . . I believe the member from Moose Jaw North had a member's statement on it, and they delivered a couple of thousand suppers that they would fundraise. They would buy the meals from the restaurants in town, keeping the restaurants employed, and then they'd go out and deliver these meals to our less-than-fortunate in Moose Jaw. And it was just a way to give back across the community. The business community stepped up to the plate to support those less fortunate. And then the chamber of commerce came up with these great ideas.

Now I think I'm done with my thank yous. So just let me check my list — yeah, extended step-parents, grandkids, okay. I do have to make mention of a couple of points that the members have brought up today. And when they said we don't care on this side, I give my head a shake. Because I listened to the member from Prince Albert Northcote last night, and I listened to my other colleague from Prince Albert, and I listened to them both. And I remember his speech being so passionate about, not what he did as Minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], but what the folks did at SGI and the people of

Saskatchewan did with the MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] program.

That was absolute . . . To say that we don't care and we don't have a heart, and that is so inaccurate. I know for a fact that there have been Friday nights on a long weekend where I've called the minister because we've got somebody in my office in trouble. And this is after 5 o'clock. It's not a nine-to-five job, Mr. Speaker. You know that; I know that. And we stayed there and helped them to get them that house that they need or that hotel room or that food voucher or whatever it is. The minister is a phone call away. Her staff is a phone call away. Social Services has an after-hours emergency number in Moose Jaw that you can call, and we make sure that it's out there.

During this cold stretch we ran into the same problems as everybody else, but we made a point . . . I made a point and the member from Moose Jaw North made a point. We went down there and we handed out cards to the gentleman that was running rainbow thrift store. We put our cell numbers on the back. So at no point should somebody have to go homeless. That was our personal cell numbers, so he could reach out to us anytime, day or night, to make sure that we got that.

And I see already my time's running short. I don't see how I just get through my thank yous, and I don't want to take away from my colleagues. That was the biggest thing that really — and I'll be honest — ticked me off. And it hurt; it hurt to say that we don't care. I know for a fact that I care. And I know for a fact everyone on this side cares — every single one of them. I really don't care what they say because most of the time they're wrong.

So with that, because I'm out of time and I promised I wouldn't go over this time, there is no way in God's green earth that I will support that amendment. However, I do support the motion put forward by the Deputy Premier and seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North, whom I work with well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and a privilege to rise in this Assembly as I'm always humbled by the opportunity I've been given by so many to be able to do so. I do not take this position lightly or for granted. I am here to represent, speak, and advocate on behalf of so many who have placed their confidence and trust in me to do so. Thank you for allowing me to be your voice in this Assembly and advocating on your behalf.

Before I get into speaking about the 2022-23 budget, and as many if not all of my colleagues have already done, I want to take a little of my time to say thank you to some very important people.

I want to begin by thanking my constituents. Living in a border city where there is a crossover of jurisdictions between the Government of Saskatchewan and the Government of Alberta can be very frustrating at times. And during normal times this is already a challenge, but the pandemic put this community's border-city challenges on full display. Duelling restrictions and vaccination processes had me dancing the double two-step to help people understand who was in charge of what and whose restrictions they should follow.

I also represent a large rural population who, for the majority, had a whole different take on how things should go down. The emails and phone calls came in hot and heavy from everywhere and everyone. But in the end, Mr. Speaker, I have to thank all of my constituents for sharing their views with me and for showing their strength, caring, and resolve to keep themselves and communities safe and helping us all to get through the past two years.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province are usually our biggest heroes when it comes to big challenges. Those daily, numerous emails and phone calls — not always pleasant ones — weren't just handled by me, but my CA, Tracy Patterson. Tracy is a phenomenal person when it comes to calming people. She listens carefully, gives helpful direction, and provides caring support in addressing people's concerns. She puts up with a lot of frustrated and not-so-pleasant conversations. Tracy, your calm and caring demeanour make you my personal hero. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to support me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my husband, Kim, and all my children for their continued love and support. The past two years for all of us I think have helped us to never, ever take each other for granted and to show our appreciation for all the things we do, and should do, each day to show how much we love and mean to one another.

Mr. Speaker, my whole speech could be spent on sharing with you how the past two years have challenged my daughter, who is a teacher, and my seven sons and their wives and fiancées, who are all in the health care professions, some trying to open new clinics and businesses and a couple finishing up university and trying to start their careers. But all's well that ends well. They have persevered, showed frustrated patience, and moved successfully forward.

I have seven beautiful, healthy grandchildren, with the youngest one just turning one month old and the news of a set of twins coming in August. I may be busy here during the week, but it pales in comparison to our family gatherings back home each weekend. I love it and cherish all the time my family gets to spend together.

And my last thank yous, Mr. Speaker, go to my colleagues and caucus family. We are a great team, working as a team, supporting one another and showing respect and kindness. Thank you for being there for me and for each other.

Strong communities, strong economy, strong families to build a stronger Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, a better quality of life for all. Those are our government's goals in our 2030 growth plan. And the 2022-23 budget that was presented in this Assembly last week gets us back on track to accomplishing exactly what we set out to do a couple of years ago and is exactly what we know the people of this province want. Paying down debt by \$2 billion in this budget and we are on track to continue paying down debt over the next three years. A strong economy. We've created 30,000 new jobs over the past year investing in programs, services, and supports for individuals, families, and communities across the board.

Mr. Speaker, while serving as Chair of the Lloydminster Public School board, I had the opportunity to take some leadership

courses from a man by the name of Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. These courses began with inner reflection, breaking free of old beliefs, moving toward meaningful change, developing positive behaviours, and showing leadership and creativity. I believe this government took all of these points to heart when creating this budget which has put this province back on track in building a brighter and more positive future for all who choose to live here.

And of the seven habits, Mr. Speaker, that sticks in my mind the most and the one I believe supports this budget and our government's positive plan for growth is habit number 3: begin with the end in mind. And that is exactly what this budget does. The investments this budget makes in health care, education, social services, highways, post ed, agriculture, our seniors, our municipalities, our arts, culture, and sports, protection of people and property, our First Nations communities and businesses, our resource sectors, our trade and export industries and markets, and more infrastructure investment sets us back on track to achieving our 2030 growth plan and all this great province can be.

Mr. Speaker, we welcome those private investors who are bringing \$13.6 billion worth of investment to this province, who wish to make Saskatchewan home. And we thank them for the job opportunities that will help to grow our province and economy. I know most of my colleagues have mentioned these companies who are investing billions of dollars into our economy, but I don't think we can mention them enough or thank them enough for seeking out and committing to help us grow this great province: BHP Jansen potash mine, Richardson International, Viterra, Ceres Global Ag, Cargill, Federated Co-operatives, AGT Foods, Paper Excellence, and Red Leaf Pulp.

We are back on track as we engage internationally to secure access and expand international markets for Saskatchewan products and seek to grow Saskatchewan's exports and core exporting sectors. Our Premier is doing just that as I speak. This budget's investment of 3.1 million to fully fund our new international trade and export markets in United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, Mexico, and Vietnam, complementing our existing offices in Japan, India, Singapore, and China will help to establish our autonomy on the world markets and give the world more of what we have to share.

This is economics 101, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure not something the opposition understands. Their ideology involves buying up potash mines for themselves, controlling industry growth, or if that doesn't work out, just shut it down.

Mr. Speaker, I didn't get the opportunity to stand in this Assembly and speak to the debate on pipelines ensuring our energy security, even though my thoughts were transported through another means or person. I wish we could be adding increased oil production through pipelines from our province to coastal waters to the list of economic investments being made in this province.

The Lloydminster oil and gas industry, oil companies, businesses that supplied and supported the oil industry, and the skilled labour that work in that industry in my area are devastated by the years of downright trampling and gutting of the industry by our federal government, and now the love-in by our Prime Minister and federal NDP leader. Mr. Speaker, the opposition wants

cheaper fuel but support a carbon tax. Well a call from each of those members to their federal leader asking him to scrap the carbon tax and push to get pipelines built would solve the gas hikes in this province.

The world is going to need oil for a long time to come, and our federal leaders continue to turn a blind eye yet have no problem getting on a jet plane to travel the world or ride in their limos to and from the Parliament Buildings. I think oil is still used to power those favourite modes of travel. Mr. Elon Musk better get on the design of that electric jet plane right away or the feds' goal of zero emissions by 2050 will never happen. And as long as the members opposite continue to hitch their wagon to the federal leader, I think we know where they stand on pipelines in this province and country.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, my constituency has a large rural base. Farming, ranching, cattle roaming along eating grass, golden fields of canola, fields of wheat flowing in a warm, summer breeze, and the smell of fresh-cut hay bring back wonderful memories for me.

I grew up in a large family on a mixed farm, doing chores, riding the bus to and from school, weeding a large garden, milking cows, slopping hogs, feeding chickens and turkeys, cleaning grain bins, mowing the lawn, rafting on the sloughs, drowning gophers in the spring, playing ball with siblings amongst the cow pies in the pasture, helping with butchering and harvest in the fall, the smell of rain on the gravel after a fresh spring shower, and watching the beautiful sunrises and sunsets. What a wonderful life.

I know the value and important role agriculture plays in our province. It is our foundation, so promoting the quality and sustainability of Saskatchewan agriculture and natural resource exports is important and key to building a strong economy. With our Saskatchewan value-added agriculture incentive, we have been able to enhance our agri-food exports to 17.5 billion last year, the highest on record. And we are on track to meeting our goal of increasing Saskatchewan-based processing of the province's agriculture products and exports, even more. Investments in our dams and water infrastructure in this province and the new investments in our Lake Diefenbaker irrigation project will secure our agriculture industry for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, transportation in this province is a key economic driver. Having well-maintained roads and highways in this province is necessary to get our goods and services to and from markets. And since 2007, our government has invested heavily in our roads and highways, and we have filled most of the NDP craters. The '22-23 budget includes 846 million to provide over 1100 kilometres of improvements, maintenance, and building of new highways, putting us back on track to meeting our 2030 goal of addressing 10 000 kilometres of provincial highway network by 2030.

I want to thank the previous minister of Highways on working with the RM [rural municipality] of Frenchman Butte in my constituency and for the investment of rebuilding the Frenchman Butte 797 Highway and 40 kilometres of Highway 21, which by the way, sat on the NDP's desk for 20-plus years, and driving in

the ditch became the better option. This was an investment of 11.4 million, and I've received non-stop thank yous for our government stepping up and finally giving my constituents back their highway.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on the importance of investing in infrastructure, this budget includes 168.6 million for school infrastructure: 95.2 million to support ongoing planning and the construction of 15 new schools, the renovation of five existing schools; 55.9 million for preventative and emergency maintenance; and 12 million for the purchase of relocatable classrooms.

The Lloydminster Catholic high school received 10 million of that 95.2 million for the addition of classrooms, a new art and music area, a new library, and an Indigenous cultural space. The new addition is well under construction. The public high school received 25 million for a significant addition of classrooms, second gymnasium, and lab space. And I look forward to both of these grand openings in my community.

How many new schools have we built since forming government? How many have we closed down? Zero. What a difference in our infrastructure budget and the NDP's infrastructure budget record. Oh, I forgot. They don't have one and never have had one. What an investment in our next generation of well-educated learners and contributing members of our society and economic growth. Mr. Speaker, we want all our children to reach their potential, and investing in all our children, particularly at a very young age, will give every child the opportunity for success.

We all know crime has been a concern to many residents in this province, particularly in parts of rural Saskatchewan. So my constituents will be glad to see the inclusion of 936.2 million, a 10.8 per cent increase over last year, to address many of the issues around violent crimes, drug trafficking, and gangs. A Saskatchewan trafficking response team and a crime reduction team will be established in Lloydminster, bringing more officers and supports to address the increased crime in the area.

Mr. Speaker, I started with Stephen Covey's habit number 3: begin with the end in mind. This budget accomplishes just that. It puts us back on track to meeting our 2030 growth plan, removing debt, growing a strong economy, providing job opportunities for people now and our future generations, supporting the most vulnerable, investing in our health, and moving us forward as we get better.

I want to leave with a couple of things that I heard in the last few days. Mr. Speaker, there has been some criticism and hurtful words made to our members by NDP opposition members in their speeches, so I want to leave everyone with something I used to say and still say to my children. These are inspirational words attributed to many different people, but today, let's say it's from Mama Colleen:

Watch your thoughts, for they become your words. Watch your words, for they become your actions. Watch your actions, for they become your habits. Watch your habits, for they become your behaviours. Watch your behaviours, for they become your character. And it is your character that determines your destiny.

Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment, and I will be supporting the motion put forward by the Deputy Premier and Finance minister, seconded by the member from Moose Jaw North. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'll get out of the way that I will be supporting the motion and voting against the amendment.

It doesn't seem like that long ago, Mr. Speaker, that I was on my feet responding to the Throne Speech, and a few things have changed under the dome for me. My chief of staff of four years, Jeremy Brick, has moved into the Premier's office, and he's eminently deserving. I wasn't terribly surprised. We'd been through a lot together, and certainly I was sad to lose him as a chief. But you don't lose people as friends, and we still talk a lot. So that's all good.

And it's the old saw about closing a door and opening a window, Mr. Speaker. Carter Zazula, who was formerly in Parks, is now my chief. And he's just lovely, lovely to have, deeply committed, passionate about energy, amazing work ethic and code of honour. He is a good dude. I also have Ashley Knisley in my office, Mr. Speaker, who's very valuable and valued. Very, very good at policy work. She gets the issues.

And new to our office is Isho Shamo, who comes to us from Social Services. And he's a geologist, which will be very helpful in Energy and Resources. And he seems to have a proper fan club in the building. People come and go and visit him, and I understand he talks regularly with constituency assistants about what's going on in their lives. And my colleagues all say, oh, you have Isho. So it all sounds very propitious, Mr. Speaker.

I have to mention Krista, Krista Heisler, senior admin, who's just wonderful. She makes everything run in our office just as smoothly as silk and is just such a pleasant and welcoming ambassador. And just overall, I was telling the Minister for Crown Investments the other day how lovely it is to hear the laughter in my office and how rewarding that is. So it's always good to hear.

I also have to give a big shout-out to my constituency assistant, Betty Anne Stevenson, who equally is just a delight to work with. I never worry about the state of things in the constituency office when I'm away because I know she has everything under such elegant and professional control.

And I want to give an extra shout-out to my parents, whom I love so dearly, and my little Max, little Max who's actually graduating from grade 12 in just three months, trying to cram in every last thing before he takes on the world. And it's such an inspiration to me, he is. And how wonderful it is, I often think, to have young people in one's life. They keep one from getting too stodgy. They remind one to always keep the faith, and that hope is always alive.

So, Mr. Speaker, on the budget. This is a very good budget. And listening to those members across the aisle is like listening to some alternate reality. It's like *The Twilight Zone*. And the irony,

the irony, Mr. Speaker, the other night we had the member for Saskatoon Nutana indulging in a very long allegory about Thomas the train or *The Little Engine That Could* or couldn't, or something. But what really jumped out was her talk about affordability. You know, dare I say, you know, regular people are paying high prices at the pumps right now. Indeed, indeed. But a great root cause of that affordability crisis, which was percolating before the current tragic war and in many ways predated the geopolitical upheaval that's going on right now, Mr. Speaker, was the looming supply chain and energy crisis.

And of course it's very convenient to say, oh you know, we can't talk about that. But the US environmental secretary, envoy, John Kerry, as one example, former presidential candidate, he's talking about it. And in effect he said recently it would be very unfortunate if all this talk about oil production and energy security had got the climate discussion off track. But of course that's a risk when a country such as Germany is telling its citizens to ration natural gas, and I heard that this morning.

And of course the members opposite would agree with the John Kerrys of this world, Mr. Speaker. The member for Saskatoon Nutana, she's Energy critic. She's in favour of hard production caps. She's said as much, has called the federal carbon tax a necessity. She's sung the praises of an East-West electrical grid, you know, just like that. Has she checked out the cost of that, Mr. Speaker? You think that that would have an impact, you'd think, on affordability and the analysis of what that actually means.

We've said for years, Mr. Speaker, that energy security and independence are key to energy affordability, and that you can't run before you can walk. We have to build on our traditional energy strengths in lithium, in helium, in EOR [enhanced oil recovery], which we're doing. Amazing developments around helium, just one example this past year. And we can never turn our backs on the workers in our traditional oil and gas sectors because, just for starters, Mr. Speaker, there is such amazing crossover expertise that they offer to do just that, and build on what we have.

All governments have to be careful to never indulge in the overly newfangled. And I've been saying that lately, in investments that wouldn't pass muster on *Dragons' Den*. You know, I've raised this before, but as one example, just last summer when Boris Johnson in the UK [United Kingdom] unveiled his sweeping hydrogen plan, you know, headlines screamed that it would lead to ever-higher consumer utility rates for a decade, at least. And that's what virtue signalling can cost.

It's not that you never look at hydrogen, but you don't ditch everything else for hydrogen, you know, like that member for Saskatoon Nutana championing a lightening-speed green transition that would cost hundreds of thousands of energy workers in this country their jobs. Or the party, that party which during the election called for all geothermal right away. And so it's always anything but oil and gas, anything but oil and gas. And why is that?

Back in January, Mr. Speaker, the interim leader — he just didn't know it yet — announced he was going to launch some task forces focusing on the future of work, the future of energy, the future of jobs. And again always that connotation: anything but oil and gas when you talk about energy. And of course, you

know, nothing like a bureaucratic task force to really get things rocking and rolling.

But of course we already are, on this side, Mr. Speaker, focusing on the future in all these areas, in all these areas, jobs of the future. The future is ours. And far from being off track, we are very, very firmly on track, back on track, Mr. Speaker, after such a challenging two years.

And wasn't it the member for Regina University, her grand reopening plan of, I believe was it three points? It was hedged on another lockdown, Mr. Speaker. And that was the grand reopening economic plan.

Before the end of this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, we paid down the operating debt, and a number of members have mentioned this. We paid down the operating debt by 450 million. That is the best heritage fund, the best security I can think of when it comes to affordability and sustainable finances and hedging on diversification, Mr. Speaker, fostering that. We don't know where oil prices, where the world is going. So for that future security we did that, which is great, great news for the province of Saskatchewan.

[16:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, colleagues before me of course have listed in amazing speeches the last few days, all the great things that this budget has to offer. There are some amazing record investments. But I'd like to focus on highways for a moment: \$846 million in this budget for operating; 479.5 million in capital. Our growth plan aims to upgrade and build 10 000 kilometres of highway upgrades by 2030.

And, Mr. Speaker, at Christmas, we as a family drove to Banff. We took the No. 7 Highway to Rosetown, on to the border at Alsask. And on we went.

An Hon. Member: — Kindersley.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Yes, through there as well. Kindersley. And I hadn't done that, I hadn't done that trip for a while. But you know, going up it was always, our roads are so bad; Alberta's are so good. You know, the usual. My goodness now, my goodness now, Mr. Speaker, the Alberta highway going on from Alsask is terrible. It's terrible. There are no passing lanes, no nothing. It's hard to find a gas station, you know. Whereas ours, I think the Minister of Highways should jump in a shiny truck, not an EV [electric vehicle], once a month and drive up and down the province with a big blow horn and big signs and just trumpet what our record is on highways. Because we can be so proud of that, Mr. Speaker.

You cross back into Saskatchewan and the communities are vibrant, like Kindersley. There are signs along the highway. There's infrastructure. There are amazing passing lanes, and not only from there, from Saskatoon to Humboldt. You know, the twinned highway to P.A. [Prince Albert]. Our highways, this government has brought this province into the 21st century. It gave us, it gave us our province when it came to highways, Mr. Speaker.

And in the North too there's so much happening. Last year we

invested \$67 million in northern airports and roads. The Premier also made a promise to complete our portion of the La Loche-Fort McMurray all-weather road.

But before I go on, Mr. Speaker, I do want to welcome our new member for Athabasca with all my heart, with all my heart. Such a positive, vibrant voice, Mr. Speaker. And after he won, there were some academics, some pundits, who claimed we haven't been supportive of northern issues. And I guess voters for our new member would beg to differ.

But I would ask them, does supportive include the economy, infrastructure, and the environment? How about those highways, Mr. Speaker? How about provincial timber allocations worth \$1 billion in new investment and over 2,000 jobs? And, Mr. Speaker, more First Nations are employed by Saskatchewan's forestry sector than in any other province. How about millions over the last decade committed to the full cleanup and miraculous, really miraculous ecological remediation of the Gunnar and Lorado mine sites, Mr. Speaker, in partnership with Indigenous contractors? I would call that support.

And as the economy goes, so goes the North. The North is among top job growth rates in the country. Cameco recently announced the reopening of its McArthur River and Key Lake mines. We have NexGen active, Rio Tinto for diamonds, Foran for copper, Seabee gold. Northern exploration is on a roll. Service providers have never been so busy. We're better placed than any jurisdiction to be a critical minerals powerhouse in this province. I was just telling Minister Wilkinson that on the phone earlier today, and there's a reason why mining companies named Saskatchewan Canada's best bet for investment last year: jobs of the future, Mr. Speaker.

Where do I start on the energy side of things? What a difference four years makes. But at the same time, there are so many recurring themes, variations on themes, projects which could have been crucial to our energy security and now to helping our European partners. They're still being killed off. They're still being killed off, Mr. Speaker, including by Bill C-69, the Saguenay liquid natural gas facility being one in Quebec, one example. Warren Buffett, his company walked away from investing in that project a few years ago. Presumably he could read the Canadian investment climate, the writing on the wall. Foreign investment is down 50 per cent in this country over the last five years.

The federal government announces increase in production a week ago, very hard to keep track, nowhere near what we have the potential, of course, to produce. And then yesterday they re-announced caps on production in a sector, the oil and gas sector. Keep in mind that Natural Resources Canada itself, its own numbers, has stated generated more or less flat emissions for 20 years.

But the announcement yesterday: it's not quite caps. It's caps later, but first come consultations, except those don't happen either, Mr. Speaker. And by their own admission, their modelling is all off. So we are demanding as a province transparency, demanding that they show us their numbers, because a big part of this is data. We've said that for years and tried for years to get the federal government to share their methane data, all their data, and they won't.

Stephen Guilbeault publicly congratulated us on Twitter back in December about our methane reduction efforts — 50 per cent reduction five years ahead of schedule — and then turned around and said, it's going to be 75 per cent, you know, but based on data about Saskatchewan. They never show us based on data collected in Ottawa about oil and gas sites they've never visited, continually changing the ground rules.

And so a lot stays the same, Mr. Speaker, which is why we're saying we have a strong track record when it comes to data, when it comes to scientific reporting and research, a strong, internationally recognized record of regulatory strength. And we're going to stand by that. And we're going to say, you know, we're going with the made-in-Saskatchewan data, and you tell us why we can't.

As I wrap up, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to leave colleagues with an interesting list that I came across not so long ago. Wait for it. It's Queen Elizabeth I's nine principles of power. It's like an early leadership secrets of successful people that the member for Lloydminster was talking about, but 16th century version. So stay with me on this one.

Mr. Speaker, the principles are fascinating in their timelessness and I have them in my office. Queen Elizabeth I, obviously a power woman. Number one is never to marry. We'll leave that one aside — special application to her circumstances. Number two, Mr. Speaker, pick wise counsellors. And I think that's key. No fifth columns. Never give up. You know, fight on the beaches. Loyalty forever. You need people around you who won't be co-opted by the powers and forces against you and what you stand for. And in some ways, in some cases, I occasionally think that even the oil and gas sector itself could follow that advice.

Give the highest priority to finance is another one. Mission accomplished. I think we're doing that. Another one is avoid war. Very top of mind now, timeless advice, and of course there's a difference between an Elizabeth, for example, who understood the stakes and the strategies and still avoided war, and some mere pacifist pushover.

Number five, open opportunities to create wealth. Again, on it. Important in the 16th century, important now. Avoid newfangled innovation for the sake of it. Not avoid innovation; avoid newfangled innovation for the sake of it. And apparently she was quite big on this one, so I would have liked her.

Improve the usefulness of existing institutions, number seven. It's not always about ripping down, tearing up. It's about reforming and fixing and building on. Next is be moderate in all things. And finally, it's better to take no decision than the wrong one. Mr. Speaker, we all have to make decisions. As a government, we have made decisions through the last two years. We've made decisions through the last 15 years. And some we change, some we revisit, and some we hold onto fast.

I love the possibility and the positivity and forward-lookingness that I'm sensing from my colleagues in their speeches this time around. And a number of us have commented on it. I think the last two years, Mr. Speaker, have really focused us more than ever on what's important and what we want to achieve and be, personally and politically and socially, you know, to breathe

again. And I know on this side we really do feel, in the former Premier's words, that the best days for this province are still ahead.

We've never been so united, Mr. Speaker. We've never been so united now behind our current Premier. And I think over the last few years, we've all been asked, you know, one-offed, do you stand with your caucus on the decisions that have been made? Do you stand with your Premier? And I never don't say we are 100 per cent united in this caucus, Mr. Speaker, and 100 per cent united in that.

And there's so much, there's so much left to do. And I think we all are sensing this great possibility, this wonderful opportunity now coming out, this great momentum that we have and that this province has. And really there's so much left to do, but overarching all of it is a love for this place and for this beautiful province and a wish truly to leave it better off. And we're sensing that in the energy of these speeches the last few days, Mr. Speaker. And I know that's what drives my colleagues. It's certainly what drives me, and never, ever giving up for the next generation, to never leave that threatened, all that we've achieved and still can.

And so I think when it comes down to the budget and the opportunities that it creates across the range of sectors that it creates, we're ready. We're absolutely energized and absolutely united in that effort, Mr. Speaker. And I have two minutes to continue to speak, so I will . . .

An Hon. Member: — Any fishing stories?

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — A fishing story? No. I'm being peer pressured, Mr. Speaker, to say all kinds of nice things about my colleagues around me, which isn't very difficult.

I do think that in some of the discussions that we're having around sectors, certain sectors, I think when you look at the . . . What the Minister of Finance has said is that basically, when you look at the economy and the focus on the economy, the impact that the economy has on every human services sector and what it can achieve when the economy is doing well, it's never an either-or, Mr. Speaker. It's never a question of one thing or another. It's about the whole picture of what we can achieve as a province when we raise opportunities for absolutely everyone. And I think that's what this message is about and I think it's where we stand. And I think it's where we stand for another 90 seconds or so, I believe.

And what's interesting to me, Mr. Speaker, is the change in mood. I think we do have a certain repressed energy as a province, as a country, as a world, but at such a terrible time, then, to have that countered by what we're seeing. And I think that what we are seeing reminds us of all we hold dear and all we want to foster in those we hold dear as fellow human beings. And I think that it's such a tragic outcome to, or curb of, what could have been otherwise, you know, an absolutely energized, energy-filled time.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would say that we always keep in mind what's drawn us so attentively to what's happening on the other side of the world, and we hold them in our hearts and in our prayers as we follow a new chapter for ourselves as a province

and a new direction. With that I'll leave it. And thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, and to my amazing colleagues.

The Speaker: — It has now reached near the time of adjournment. This House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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